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CONTAINING,
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BOSTON :
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VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART I.

A WORTHY minister of the gospel, being early removed from the cares and trials of the present world, left a widow, and one daughter whom it had been a chief object of both their lives, to train up, as a child of immortality.

As her understanding opened, they often talked to her of God ; of his unbounded power, his unlimited goodness ; and taught her to look up to him as her Maker, her Preserver, her Father, and her Friend ;—one who loved her better than any earthly parent could possibly do, and who, after she had remained in this world long enough to learn those

christian virtues which would fit her for a better, would call her to that happy home, where the righteous will dwell in never-ending happiness.

When her young heart rejoiced in the communication of these delightful truths, they never failed to make her sensible that much was to be done on her own part ; that she must diligently strive to understand what God required from her, and bend her will in every thing to a cheerful submission to the holy precepts which he hath given us by his beloved son Jesus Christ. They took frequent opportunities to point out the beauty and excellence of these precepts, and in her blessed saviour the bright example of one who exactly fulfilled them all,—who endured and resisted the most powerful temptations, who blessed those that cursed him, did good to those who hated him, and not only prayed for those who despitefully used him, but with his dying breath entreated forgiveness from

his heavenly Father for those cruel men, who persecuted him, even to a shameful and torturing death.

Often would they dwell upon the glorious reward which was bestowed upon his eminent piety and perfect obedience ; and speak of his resurrection from the grave, and ascension into those regions of happiness from whence at the last solemn day he will, “ come in the clouds of heaven,” to raise his true followers to immortal life, and put them into possession of a glorious inheritance in the kingdom of his heavenly Father.

This happy and fortunate child, whose earliest and best affections were thus turned to God,—who from the first dawn of reason was taught to feel herself an accountable creature, and zealously to follow in the footsteps of her heavenly teacher,—was little more than twelve years old at the time of her father's death, and, it may be well supposed, shared deeply with her mother in the

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affliction caused by so severe a loss : but she had imbibed true christian principles, and was fully aware that his removal from this world *must* be right and good, because it was *God's doing*. The mourners therefore comforted each other with the remembrance of the holy and useful life which their dear friend had spent ; which through the mercy of their good Creator, left them no room to doubt of his being of that blessed number who have “ died in the Lord,” who “ rest from their labours,” and “ whose works shall follow them.”

The pious and tender mother now redoubled her endeavours to fix every christian grace and virtue in the breast of her child ; that she might as little as it was possible feel the loss of the dear instructor, who had been taken away before the time when the allurements and temptations of the world begin to be most dangerous to the youthful heart. She knew that upon the state of

her daughter's mind, and the regulation of her conduct during the course of a few approaching years, her character for life would probably depend : and instead of devoting the greatest part of her time and talents to unprofitable studies, which only administer to vanity and attach us to the world, she unceasingly taught her to " flee from youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace ;" — " as a servant of the Lord, not to strive, but to be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, sober-minded, and in all things showing herself a pattern of good works."

God gave a blessing to these pious endeavours : her daughter grew up all that she could wish ; was the delight of her mother's heart, the friend of the poor, the teacher of their children ; devoted to heaven and heavenly things ; and her whole time, as far as in her lay, employed for the benefit of her fellow-creatures.

In this happy state of preparation for continued life, or sudden death, were both mother and daughter, when the latter was attacked by an illness so violent, that notwithstanding all that could be done for her it in a few weeks put an end to her life. She was early aware of her own danger, and besought her mother to prepare herself for cheerful submission to the will of God, if it should be his good pleasure to divide them for the present ; and to look forward to the joyful day when they would be again united, together with her beloved father, in the presence of Him in whom their hearts trusted,—whose tender mercy was their strong tower and rock of defence,—and who will never leave nor forsake those who love and obey him.

I will not attempt to describe the feelings of this fond mother, when her darling lay lifeless before her : nothing but a perfect dependence upon the gracious

promises of that good Being who rules all events, and causes them to "work together" for the benefit of those who love him, could have supported her under so heavy an affliction. But "God is a sure refuge in the time of trouble!" and as all earthly props sink under us, or fall from our grasp, we cling more closely to Him who alone can never fail us.

The character and conduct of this excellent woman had gained her the friendly regard and good opinion of all who knew her: but she had no near relation, no person upon whom she could bestow those warm and tender affections which had been divided between her husband and her daughter. The world seemed like a dreary wilderness, through which she was travelling alone: and though submission to the will of God was so fixed a habit of her mind, that no murmur arose in her heart, no complaint proceeded from her lips; yet she seem-

ed in danger of falling, unawares to herself, into a state of melancholy.

From this however she was saved by that never-failing source of comfort to the human race, *true and rational religion* ; which told her that she was still in a state of trial, and that life was doubtless continued to her for some good purpose both to herself and others.

She lived in a populous neighbourhood, and it was a time of dearth and scarcity among the poor, whose necessities she had all her life been in the habit of relieving to the utmost extent of her power. Indeed, she constantly denied herself many comforts and conveniences, which others in her situation thought absolutely necessary, that she might be able more liberally to supply the wants of her suffering fellow-creatures.

After the death of her daughter, it is not surprising that her mind should be for a time too much occupied with her own griefs to suffer her to attend to those

of her poor neighbours in the manner she was used to do : but in the course of a few weeks she began to accuse herself of a neglect of duty ; and hearing that a labourer who lived near had been dangerously ill, and was still confined to his room, she resolved no longer to indulge the indolence both of body and mind, which sorrow is too apt to bring upon us, but to endeavour to lighten its load by striving to console one who was also afflicted, though from a cause unlike her own. This resolution was no sooner formed than begun to be executed : she entered into the cottage of the sick man ; and after tenderly inquiring into the particulars of his complaint, and promising to send him nourishment such as she perceived his case required, the following dialogue passed between them.

Lady. I most truly compassionate your sufferings, Thomas, and wish to do all in my power to enable you to bear them patiently till God sees it the pro-

per time to relieve you. Are you desirous to do this? and do you pray earnestly to him for support in this time of hard trial?

Thomas. I pray God to put an end to my pain, or to take me out of this world, for I am weary of my life.

Lady. You say that you are weary of this life; but are you sure that you shall be happier in another? Are you prepared to die by having led a holy and virtuous life? Should you not rather pray for added days and years, to give you time and opportunity to get the better of your sins, before you are called to the last solemn account?

Thomas. Yes, yes, I have many sins; but we are all sinful, and I hope the Lord will have mercy upon us all.

Lady. The sins of other people, my friend, are what neither you nor I have any concern with, unless we could persuade them to repent. But we ought to set in earnest about getting rid of our

own: God is merciful to all who truly turn to him, and forsake their evil ways; but "he is a God of judgment," and will not let the wicked doer go unpunished.

Thomas. Whatever my sins are, it is too late to undo them now, and I have been no worse than my neighbours.

* *Lady.* Let me again remind you, that your neighbours having been as bad, or worse than yourself, will do nothing towards excusing you. All men are required to live soberly, honestly, and righteously in this world; and each must give an account of his own deeds. If you have led an unholy and immoral life, your punishment will not be the less because many others have done the same.

Thomas. That may be: but I cannot help what is past, and I hope the Lord will have mercy upon my poor soul.

Lady. God is always merciful, always ready to hearken to the prayer of

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the truly penitent. But he will not receive into his glorious presence one who dies in his sins ; one whose heart is not changed, and who, if his health was restored, would return again to the same evil course of life.

Thomas. I thank God I have never wronged any one, but have worked hard, and lived hard, for many a long year.

Lady. If you have been strictly honest in all your dealings, that is a great and material point ; but in other things I fear you have not done so well : have you led a sober life ?

Thomas. Why, I cannot say much as to that. But I had no comfort at home, with my wife and her children.

Lady. You married a widow with a young family, which it was your own choice to do ; and from the day in which you became her husband, it was your duty to have been the kind and affectionate father of her children. Unless you intended to do this, you ought not

to have married their mother. I fear you have grudged their necessary maintenance, and that has caused unhappiness between you and your wife.

Thomas. I was a fool to marry as I did; but I have suffered enough for it.

Lady. Your sufferings have proceeded chiefly from your own bad conduct, which I feel it my duty, if possible, to convince you of; for, unless you can be made fully sensible of your faults, it is impossible that you should repent and reform. Had you acted as a good man and a christian, you would have taken the poor fatherless children under your tenderest care, and encouraged your wife to be a true mother to them. The money which you have spent in public houses would have fed and clothed them comfortably; they would have grown up under your roof, and loved you as a father; nay, would perhaps have felt more affection, and gratitude towards you than your own children will

ever do, because you had done more for them than they could strictly demand at your hands. The poor girl whom, while yet a child, you drove from your house, might now have been your nurse and comforter; and the boy who has just enlisted, if you had set him a good example, made his home comfortable, and had him taught to read his Bible, and keep holy the seventh day, might now have been a prop and support to you, helping to maintain both his mother and yourself.

Thomas. You take their parts too much, madam: it is a hard thing to be obliged to labour for other people's children.

Lady. If you thought so, you ought not to have made it your duty by marrying their mother. But believe me, if you had conducted yourself towards them as a kind friend, instead of a cruel enemy, you would not at this moment have been a shilling the poorer for such gene-

rosity. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth," says the wise king Solomon; and the reason of this plainly is, that God gives a blessing to the labours of the good man; what he has goes far, and holds out; while vice wastes and destroys the substance of the ungodly.

Thomas. Well, perhaps I have been wrong; but my wife is of such a temper as would drive any man to a public house for peace and quietness.

Lady. Ah, Thomas! you did not find her temper bad till you made her unhappy. It was your drunkenness, and your harsh treatment of her children, that made her what she is. An industrious, kind, and religious master of a family may make his wife and children almost what he pleases; as such a one will be careful to marry no one who has not in all respects a good character. But what right has a man who lives as you have done, to hope for a kind and obliging wife? Can she love or regard a hus-

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band who comes home to her two or three nights in the week in a state of brutal intoxication? one who spends half the hard-earned wages of his labour to make himself feel and appear like a fool, or a madman! There are women of so truly christian a spirit as to continue kind and gentle even to such men as these: but no one has a right to expect it from his wife, or to blame her when it is otherwise; nor can I pity any man for a misery which he thus wilfully brings upon himself.

Thomas. I believe I have been to blame in many things; but it is now all over, and I am too old to mend.

Lady. O do not say so, do not think so. While life remains there is time for repentance and amendment. Who knows whether God may not yet restore your health, and grant you many more years in this world? And if you can be brought to view your past conduct in its true light, if your eyes can be opened to see

how hateful and destructive a thing sin is, and to be fully sensible how guilty you have been, I should yet have strong hopes of your becoming a good and happy man.

Believe me, to see such a change taking place in you, or in any other fellow-creature, would be one of the greatest pleasures of my life.

Thomas. Ah! madam, you were always good, so was your dear daughter. But for her and your kind care and bounty, my poor lad would never have got through his fever. It must almost have broken your heart to part with Miss Fanny.

Lady, wiping her eyes. She was indeed a dear and good child! But I have a solid comfort in knowing that she was *fit to die*. Though her life was short, it had answered the great and glorious purpose for which it was bestowed. She was ripe for heaven! and God took her before she had known the cares and

sorrows which attend a long pilgrimage through this world of trial.

Thomas. Her being so good made it a hard thing to part with her.

Lady. At the time, perhaps, it did increase my grief; but now it is my hourly source of consolation and thankfulness. I continually reflect that, were she now alive, she might in many different ways be made unhappy, and even be drawn aside by some great temptation to offend her God! for who is secure from sin during their abode on earth? But she is now removed from every sorrow, safe from every danger! She has finished a virtuous course; and, through the infinite love and mercy of her Creator, there is laid up for her "a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

O my friend, though you see me weep, I know that I have reason to rejoice; and believe me, my heart is thankful that my dear husband and daughter are in the happy number of those who have died

“in the Lord,” and will have their part in the first glorious resurrection.

Thomas. How is that, madam? will not all the dead rise at the same time?

Lady. We are told by the apostle Paul, that “as Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” And in another place he says, “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise *first*.” and John in the book of revelations, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.”

By these texts we learn, that the faithful and obedient disciples of our Lord, those who have given the grand proof of love to him which he above all requires—doing the will of his heavenly Father,—will be *first* raised, by that power which the *Almighty* hath bestowed upon their glorified master. Christ is “the

first fruits of them that slept," and "afterwards they that are *Christ's* at his coming." "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to *God* even *The Father*." "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall *the Son* also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that *God* may be *All in All*!"

Thomas. O madam, I could hear you for ever! It is no wonder that you are so good, when you are continually looking for such glorious things. How dreary and dreadful is the thought of being left in the cold grave, while all the righteous are raised to life and happiness by their blessed master! It chills one's heart to think of it.

Lady. Think often, my friend, of this, and of the still heavier punishments which the scriptures pronounce on the ungodly: and then reflect upon the glorious prospect which the morning of the resurrection will open to the righteous;

—a never-ending eternity of blessedness ; a degree of bliss which “eye hath no seen, nor ear heard, nor hath ever entered into the heart of man to conceive !” This happiness, this glory, is opened to you, to every one : And can it be possible for any human being to be so stupid, or so ungrateful, as to reject it ? I see that you are shocked at the bare idea of such madness. Resolve then, by thoroughly reforming your heart and life, to become one of the happy number who take the Lord for their God.

Thomas. O that I could promise to do this ! I know that it would be well for me here and hereafter ; but what is required is difficult, it is beyond my power.

Lady. God is too just and merciful to require from any one more than he has given him full power to perform. And for the difficulty, take courage, and fear no hardship that can meet you in that path where the Lord is your helper

and your firm support. Remember the words of our heavenly teacher, "He that will come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me." If your wife is violent and unreasonable, if your children are perverse and ill-tempered, think of the evil example which you have hitherto set them, and look upon the vexation it gives you, as the cross that your own bad conduct has brought upon you, and which it is your duty patiently to bear.

If you will steadily resolve to do this, doubt not but God will by degrees lighten your burden, by making a religious life delightful to yourself, and softening the hearts of all around you. How widely different towards you will the feelings of your family be, when you come home at the end of the week, with kindness in your heart and on your lips, and your full wages in your pocket, to buy whatever is wanting for yourself and them! How different a being will

you appear in their eyes ! Instead of a foolish, brutish, quarrelsome creature, reeling home from his sottish companions to terrify and abuse his helpless family ; your little innocents will be eagerly watching at the door for the return of a tender and beloved father, who comes to rest from his labour by his own fireside, and enjoy a comfortable meal with his affectionate family : for an industrious and sober man can in the worst of times afford to have a comfortable meal, and to give his wife and children a full share of it.

Thomas. That would indeed be a happy life ; and there would be some encouragement for a man to aim at it, if he had a wife who kept her house in order, and brought up her children as a christian should do.

Lady. If you, my friend, will act a truly christian part, I can almost promise that yours shall do the same. When she sees that you are sorry for your past

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faults, and really desirous to make her and your children happy, she will by degrees become kind and grateful. But you must not look for this change at once: you will find by your own experience that it is hard to get the better of bad habits; and must therefore have much patience with her and with your children. One of the difficult things you have to do, is, completely to conquer the violence of your own temper, which has been so long indulged that it will require many and hard struggles before it can be completely overcome. Yet this must be done before you can call yourself a disciple and follower of that master who was "meek and lowly of heart," whose yoke we must take upon us, and willingly bear, before his heavenly doctrines will give *rest unto our souls*.

Thomas. I thank you, madam, from my heart I thank you, for all that you have said, and wish that I had been so

happy as to have heard it long ago, while I had youth and health to offer in the service of God and my fellow creatures: but at my time of life it is hard to make the thorough change you talk of; indeed I feel that it is past my power, beyond my reach.

Lady. Do not think so meanly of the abilities which a good and bountiful God has bestowed upon you. Let me again assure you that he asks from no one more than he gives him full power to perform; which leaves the vicious man no cloak, no cover for his sins. He will not only graciously accept your sincere and humble endeavours to do his will, but he has promised to assist those endeavours. If you forsake your sins, and come to him with all your heart, he will not only freely pardon what is past, but still hold out the mighty prize of *eternal life*, as within the reach of the truly penitent.

Thomas. Go on, dear madam, tell me more of the great work which I ought to undertake.

Lady. You are so happy as to have learnt to read, and that most precious of all books, the *New Testament*, lies on the table before you. While you are confined by your present weakness, make its contents your constant study; and if the Almighty should mercifully restore you to your former health and strength, I trust you will return to your labours an altered man.

All the doctrines and precepts which are necessary to the great work of your salvation, you will find plain, and easy to be understood: strictly conform your life to these, and do not trouble yourself about those passages which your want of learning may render difficult. Remember that "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" that this beloved of God was sent into the world "to bless

us, by turning every one of us *from his iniquities.*" Remember, too, "that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained," even our Lord Jesus Christ; from whose sentence "every one will receive according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good or evil." These texts are so plain, that even the most ignorant can hardly mistake their meaning.

Thomas. Instruct me further with respect to what God expects and requires from me.

Lady. Our Lord himself shall instruct you. When asked by one of the Jews that great and momentous question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he said unto him, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" and he answering said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength,

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and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast answered right : *This do, and thou shalt live.*"

Here, then, from Christ, the beloved and anointed of God, we learn what is required from us,—to love our Creator with all the powers which he hath bestowed upon us, and to strive earnestly to do good to our fellow creatures. Is there, in this, any thing too difficult for a man to perform ?

Thomas. It does not seem at all difficult when we talk about it ; but it is so unlike the ways of the world, so different from every thing that one sees and hears, and so many things happen every day to drive away good thoughts and provoke to bad ones, that, though I hope I shall never again be the man I have been, I fear I never shall be what I ought.

Lady. Are you fully convinced that to offend God is the greatest of all evils,

that to lead a life of sin is the extreme of folly and madness, and that it would be well for you if this great change in your heart and conduct could be brought about? Would you rejoice to find yourself in the path of righteousness, with the bright prospect of heaven direct before your view?

Thomas. Ah! madam, who would not rejoice to find himself in such a case? But my heart fails me, it is beyond my reach, I cannot live up to it.

Lady. I will ask you one plain question. Suppose your master, the rich Squire, was to offer you the half of his great estate, if you would for *one week* lead a truly christian life; thinking often of another world; and many times in a day praying for the help of God to assist you in preparing for it; keeping yourself resolutely sober, bearing patiently with the faults of your wife and children, and doing all in your power to make them good and happy; being industrious in

your work, kind to your companions and neighbours, and seeking for opportunities to do them good : Tell me, my friend, tell me when you have well considered the question, Could you lead this life for one week, if half the Squire's estate was to be your reward at the end of it ?

Thomas, after thinking some time. Such a life would require a constant and strict attention to every thought, word, and action ; one must never be for a moment off one's guard :—but yet, for *one week* I think I could so far master myself as to do it.

Lady. Well, if you can do it for *one week* you can do it for *two* : and if you can behave as a real christian for a fortnight,—surely, if the *reward was doubled*, you could for a month.

Thomas. Why, by degrees I should get more into the way of it, and perhaps might even go on for a month, if so much depended upon it.

Lady. Enough, enough, my friend. If you can be good for *one month*, you can for *twelve*, and for your *whole life*: and, as you observe, you will every day get more into the way of it. At first it will require all the ~~firmness~~ *firmness* and resolution that you are master of; but by degrees it will become easy, and then delightful. And for a reward—instead of an earthly possession, from which you must soon be removed by the cold hand of death, you will inherit a heavenly kingdom, “a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give at that day unto all ~~that~~ *that* love his appearing.”

Thomas. O madam! you have conquered, you have convinced me. I see that, through the great mercy of God, even such a sinner as I, may by a thorough change of heart and conduct still hope to gain admittance into heaven: and by the assistance of his grace, if he grant me life, I will lose no time in

setting about this great work. From what you have told me, and from what I knew before, I know much of what I ought to do ; and by God's help I will learn the rest from that holy book. Every night and morning on my knees will I entreat his pardon of my past sins, and many times in a day shall my heart pray to him for renewing grace. The poor children whom I have cruelly driven from their mother's roof shall in future have a home there ; and by my patient kindness to my wife and infants, and my steady labour for their support, I will make ~~them~~ all the amends in my power for their past sufferings.

Lady. O Thomas ! you make me weep, at the same time that you rejoice my heart. "If there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over every sinner that repenteth," shall not a fellow creature partake in the pure delight ?

Begin your christian course this very hour, and go on from day to day, from

week to week, from month to month, till at length, in God's own good appointed time, you are called from "your work and labour of love," to inherit the glorious rewards prepared for his faithful servants. Keep heaven and eternal life continually in your thoughts, and as it were before your eyes, by suffering no day to pass without reading some portion of the holy scriptures. Lose no time in having your children taught to read, and in hours of leisure instruct them yourself, being careful always to do it with kindness, and making the employment a pleasure rather than a task.

Every night, before you sleep, closely examine yourself with respect to your behaviour through the day: and if all has been well; if you have kept evil at a distance, and more especially if you have had an opportunity of doing good to any fellow creature; pour out your heart in thankfulness to God, and close your eyes in peace under his assured

protection. But if you have for a moment forgotten your duty, and suffered even a wicked thought to dwell upon your mind, or a rash word to proceed from your lips,—humble yourself before the throne of his mercy, and earnestly implore forgiveness of what is past, and an increase of resolution to enable you in future to avoid a like offence.

Believe me when I again assure you, that when you have for a few weeks accustomed yourself to live this truly christian life, it will become easy, and in the end delightful; filling your heart with “that peace which passeth all understanding,” which nothing that befalls us in this world can either give or take away.

Thomas. Say on, say on, dear lady. My heart softens as you speak; I see that all your instructions are right and good, and I bless God for sending you to enlighten my mind, and show me the danger of the careless and sinful life which I have hitherto led.

Lady. I will say a few words on a subject of great importance,—your manner of spending the Lord's day ; which, as it commemorates the resurrection of Christ, that glorious proof of the certainty of our own, should be kept as a time of rejoicing and thankfulness to God, and of improvement to ourselves and our families. Go with your wife and children to a place of public worship as often in the day as you have an opportunity to do : diligently attend to the prayers, and lift up your soul to him who made you. Let your worship be the worship of the heart, "in spirit and in truth." Bless him, praise him, thank him, and adore him, for the vast and unmerited bounty, to which you owe all that you now have, and all that you still hope for.

Hearken attentively to the instruction which your minister gives you from the pulpit, and talk of it to your family when you return home ; reminding them of the most useful parts, and trying to explain

it to their understandings. Question your children respecting what they have heard, and praise and reward any proofs of their attention. Let all be done with such love and kindness, that the performance of religious duties may appear to them, what it really is, pleasant and delightful. As far as it is possible, keep all worldly cares and troubles from intruding themselves into your mind on this day. Six days we are allowed, and indeed commanded, to "labour, and do all that we have to do;" but the seventh should be "kept holy unto the Lord our God," to study his written word, that we may gain a more perfect knowledge of his will, and to bless, praise, and thank him for all his goodness to us. When the season and the weather will permit, take your family between, or after, their religious services, into the fields and gardens, that they may breathe the pure air, and admire the useful plants, and beautiful flowers, which are spread over

the earth for our benefit and pleasure. If friends or neighbours are disposed to join your company, do not shun them, but strive to enter into such conversation as will lead their thoughts to that happier, better world, where a long, a glorious sabbath of unalloyed felicity is prepared for the children of God.

Thomas. O madam ! every word that you say reaches my heart. I see that the path of righteousness is a glorious path ; and whatever it costs me, I am resolved, with the help of God, to walk in it for the remainder of my life.

How blind have I been to my real interest and happiness, in living as I have done, as if all was over with us when we die, and there were no other world than this ! Yet I knew the contrary, I knew that a time of solemn reckoning must come, though I went on from day to day, making no preparation for it, but rather by my most unchristian conduct "heaping up wrath against the day of wrath:"

and but for the goodness of God in sending you to me, I should too surely have so continued, till death seized upon me in the midst of my sins.

Lady. Bless, bless and praise his holy name, for thus awakening you to a sense of your duty, and a consciousness of your real condition ; and bowing humbly down with me, implore his gracious help to strengthen and confirm your pious resolutions.

Here they both kneeled down, and the lady devoutly repeated the following prayer :

“ O most holy and merciful God ! accept the grateful thanks of him, whom thou hast now called from a life of sin and darkness, into the glorious light of thy gospel.

“ With the lowest humility he entreats thee to pardon his former wilful blindness ; his many and great offences : and grant him thy powerful help, that in the

course of his future life. he may return to them no more, but, by daily increasing holiness and virtue, prove that his repentance is sincere, and reconcile himself to thee, his Maker, his Preserver, and the Rock of his salvation !

“ As every passing day brings us nearer to the awful hour when “ the trumpet shall sound,” and the dead arise to judgment, may all thy children of mankind, by turning from their evil ways, and seeking thee with their whole hearts, prepare to meet the solemn sentence which will then be pronounced upon all the sons of men ! May we who now bow down before thee, so steadily resist the temptations that are in the world, and so diligently strive to obey the commands of our beloved master, whom thou hast appointed to be “ the way, the truth, and the life,” that we may be received among the happy number of his faithful servants, and, through thy boundless good-

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ness and mercy, enter with him "into the joy of our Lord!"

The lady arose from her knees greatly affected, and, promising soon to make the penitent another visit, left the cottage.

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART II.

How delightful to a good mind is the consciousness of having performed a virtuous action! Even the endeavour to benefit a fellow creature is always reflected upon with approbation, though we have not been successful: but when our efforts seem to have prospered, when we believe that we have awakened the love of God in a heart which was before cold and insensible, and been employed in the blessed work of turning a sinner from the evil of his ways,—how grateful, how thankful should we be to the Giver of all good, for making us the favoured instruments of his bounty to our brethren of mankind!

So grateful, so thankful, was the worthy widow as she walked home from Thomas's cottage. Her heart had not felt so light since the death of her beloved daughter ; and after preparing a comfortable dinner for the poor man and sending it by the hands of her only servant, she sat down to her own with a degree of cheerfulness which gave a relish to her simple fare. In the evening she walked into her garden, which, though not large, was both pleasant and fruitful. Her late dear husband had delighted in it ; and a Bible, with a few other favourite books, was kept in a summer-house, to which he used to retire for several hours every day, to read, write, and meditate upon the written word of God. In many a sweet summer evening did his wife and daughter go with him to this pleasant spot ; and after reading some favourite passage in the *best of all books*, or hearing what he had last written to explain and enforce its precious contents,

they would take their coffee, or the fresh fruits of their garden, with a degree of enjoyment which is unknown to those who meet in spacious rooms, dressed in costly apparel, and partake of the most expensive delicacies. The object of these children of the world is merely amusement, and to while away the time which was lent them for far better purposes. They seek no improvement to their own minds, no benefit to their fellow creatures; and often return from these useless meetings, tired and out of humour with themselves and their associates! But with this wise and happy family it was never so: to their little retreat in the summer-house none were invited but dear friends; those who carefully studied the precepts of Christ, and made his life the bright example of their conduct; and nothing unpleasant could arise in a society, where each, in the true spirit of christian love and charity, strove to promote the comfort and welfare of the rest.

After their afflicting loss, the widow and her daughter often visited the spot where they had received so many lessons of piety and virtue; reading the books which their dear friend had most delighted in, and recollecting all that he had said and done in the happy and profitable hours they had there spent together; which, though at first it cost them many tears, by degrees became one of the highest enjoyments of their lives. Since the death of her daughter, however, the sorrowful and lonely mother had never entered the place. But on the day that we are speaking of, while her heart was glowing with thankfulness to God, for the great change which she trusted he had by her means wrought in the heart of the poor man, she found herself unexpectedly at the door; and having the day before put the key into it, she called forth all her resolution, and entering, sat down upon a chair, nearly overpowered by the tender recollections which at that moment rushed upon her mind.

Happily, a flow of tears came to her relief; and falling on her knees, "Support me, O my heavenly Father!" she cried: "support her who desires to submit her will to thine, and humbly to own, that whatever thou doest is holy, just, and good. Grant me thy powerful help, that while thou seest fit to continue this my earthly pilgrimage, I may so perform the duties which thou requirest from me, that, when I am called hence, I may be found worthy to rejoin those whom thou lentest to be my comforters here, and with them may rejoice in the light of thy countenance for ever!"

After continuing some time in silent prayer, she arose revived and strengthened; and opening a Bible which lay on a table before her, at the cxvith psalm, with a delight and consolation which can only be conceived by a mind as pious as her own, read as follows:

"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication.

The sorrows of death compassed me, I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple. I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken, but I was greatly afflicted. What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me? I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

"Yes, heavenly Father," cried she, closing the book, "I here humbly offer unto thee the remainder of my life. May it be spent in thanking and adoring thee, and in doing good to my fellow

creatures ! So shall I every hour become more fitted to join the happy and glorious assembly of thy worshippers, in the courts above."

The rest of the evening was spent in reading and meditation, and she retired to sleep in a state of mind more composed and cheerful, than she had enjoyed for many weeks before.

The following morning, after attending to the concerns of her little family, she went, as had been her practice in happier days, to walk and work in her garden. It had of late, like all her worldly affairs, been in a neglected state ; but she now resolved to have it put into the neat order in which she loved to see every thing around her. The man who used to work in it was lately dead ; but at the distance of a mile she heard of a person who was well skilled in the business, and resolved to go herself that morning and try to engage him.

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She set out accordingly, and had nearly reached his house, when her ears were shocked with the voices of two women, who seemed to be quarrelling, and abusing each other in a shameful manner. She soon perceived a young woman whom she concluded to be the gardener's wife, and another of a very neat and creditable appearance, but much older. Their cottages were under the same roof; and on perceiving the lady coming towards them, each hastily retired into her own habitation. After stopping a few minutes to give the woman time to recollect herself, she entered the gardener's house, and told his wife what was the occasion of her coming. She appeared in a good deal of confusion, but answered with much civility, and, reaching a chair, begged she would be pleased to sit down and rest herself; for the morning was hot, and she appeared to be tired. The widow accepted her offer, and, desiring her to do the same, in a kind and gentle voice thus addressed her.

Lady. I am afraid you do not live on friendly terms with your next-door neighbour, which must be a great cause of unhappiness to you both.

Sarah. Why, indeed, madam, I cannot say that I do. It is impossible to live peaceably by such a one as she is. I am sure I do my best, but there is no bearing every thing.

Lady. Tell me what it is that you have to bear, and I shall then perhaps be able to give you some advice which may be useful to you.

Sarah. Why, madam, I have a large family of children, and they will sometimes be playful and unlucky, for I cannot be always with them to keep them out of mischief: so they now and then do some little damage to the garden or poultry of these covetous, proud people. And when any thing of that sort happens, she is so cruel to the poor things, and so abusive to me!

Lady. What kind of woman is she in other respects? her appearance is neat and decent.

Sarah. O yes! she can well afford to appear decent. Both she and her husband saved a great deal of money while they were in service, and they have two good cows, and plenty of every thing about them.

Lady. So far they are highly to be commended, and I wish many others would follow so good an example. There are no young men or women who might not save money while in service, if they were prudent, and began in time. And by that means they might begin a married life with credit and comfort; have convenient furniture for their houses; and perhaps buy a cow, or set up in any small way of business that they were able to carry on: or, if nothing of that kind offered, how comfortable would it be to a young couple to have a small sum out at interest; to which, before their

family grew large, they might every year be adding something ! This would enable them to give their children good schooling, and afterwards to put them well out in the world, besides keeping something for their own support in sickness or old age.

Sarah. I believe, madam, you say truly ; but I had no thoughts of that kind. My wages from first to last would do no more than keep me in clothes ; for I loved dress, and tried to make as good an appearance as other girls in my station, and I married before I was two and twenty.

Lady. Too many act in the giddy manner that you have done. But had you continued a few years longer in service, and taken pains to make yourself useful and do your duty ; if you had taken a pride and a pleasure in doing this, rather than in dressing fine, you would have been valuable to your mistress, have deserved higher wages,

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and, if you lived in a good family, have had opportunities of improving both your disposition and understanding; which would have made you more fit to bring up and instruct these little innocents whom God has committed to your care.

Sarah. Ah, madam! the troubles and sorrows that I have gone through have now convinced me of my folly. But before they came I was thoughtless and high-spirited. I married hastily, and have known little but care and hardship ever since. Yet I dearly love my children, and would give the world to be able to teach them to read: but my mother was a widow, and too poor to have me taught while young, and I foolishly threw away the only opportunity that offered afterwards.

Lady. Tell me in what services you spent the younger part of your life.

Sarah. My father had worked for many years for Mr. Brown, who holds the manor farm under the squire; and as

soon as I was old enough to be useful, Mrs. Brown took me to be under the dairy-maid; and in different places in this family I continued for six years. We had constant business from morning till night; but I had good health, and went on cheerfully, though, as I said before, my wages never did more than find me in clothes.

Lady. Did your mistress never give you good advice, or instruct you in your duties to God, to her, and to yourself?

Sarah. She never gave me any instruction except in the way of my business, nor any advice but to be diligent in getting forward with my work.

Lady. Had you no family prayers? and did she never call you into the parlour on Sunday evenings to hear a sermon?

Sarah. I never heard a prayer or a sermon in the house during the whole six years that I lived in it. To be sure

we went in turn to church ; but I was always obliged to be up early, and do a good deal of work before I set out ; and we had a mile and a half to walk ; so that when I came to sit down and hear reading, I could hardly ever keep myself awake.

Lady. This was a cruel neglect in your mistress : she had grown-up daughters too, who had been at good schools ; did they never attempt even to teach you to read ?

Sarah. Ah, madam ! though my mistress was notable, and looked into every thing, the young ladies were too proud to care any thing about us servants. Most of their time was spent in visiting, and playing upon music, and making fine dresses. Sunday was more than any other a day of company and pleasure at our house ; and when the family spent it from home, as they sometimes did, all was a scene of idleness and noise : we all did just what we pleased ; and I can

truly say, that instead of the best, it was often to us the very worst day in the week.

Lady. Such a master and mistress will, I fear, be brought to a heavy account, for their unchristian neglect of the many ignorant young persons who have from time to time lived under their roof, and been committed to their care. Was this the only family in which you lived?

Sarah. No; one of my fellow-servants hired herself in town to be chambermaid at the Eagles: I had always been fond of this girl, for she was lively, and I thought very good-natured; for whenever I had broke any thing, or offended my mistress in any way, she was sure to invent some excuse to bring me off; which at the time I thought very kind, though I believe it was hurtful to me from the first, and you will hear what came of it afterwards.

Lady. No good ever came of falsehood and deceit. At the time, if it is

not found out, it may seem to save us from pain, and forward our wishes. But the word of God declares that "the lip of truth shall be established; while a lying tongue is but for a moment."

Sarah. Well, madam, this Jenny, whom I thought so much my friend, came to our wakes, and told me so much of the pleasant lives that servants led in town, that I agreed for her to get me a place there. One soon offered; and as I had lived so many years in my last, and had a fair character, I was hired. Jenny told me that it was not quite such a one as she wished, but I need only stay there till I could get a better: for as my mistress was a middle-aged lady, who kept but little company, and only one servant, she feared it would be dull: but as her house was in the very next street to the Eagles, I might run to her whenever I had a little spare time, and should always find some diversion going on there.

I found my new mistress one of the best of women. Her fortune was not large, yet she gave a great deal more in charity than Mrs. Brown, who had so much under her hand. She often visited the poor too, particularly when they were sick, and we were continually cooking broths and other nourishing things for them. She had easy remedies for burns, scalds, and bruises too, which, though cheap, never failed to cure.

Lady. Tell me some of these, my good Sarah, that I may use them for the benefit of my family and neighbours.

Sarah. Why, madam, if the scald or burn was upon the hands or arms, or the legs and feet, the part was instantly put into cold water, and kept in while we mixed some salt and vinegar very well together; about a table spoonful of salt to half a tea-cupful of vinegar. We then got two pieces of fine soft linen, and, wetting one with the mixture, took the hand or foot out of the water and laid it

upon the part that was burnt or scalded ; putting the other into the cup to be ready against the first began to dry ; which was then taken off, and the wet one instantly put into its place : and so we went on keeping the part constantly wet with the salt and vinegar, till the heat and inflammation was all drawn away, which would sometimes require us to go on for two hours or more. When the pain is quite gone, and the linen remains wet and cool upon the part, the cure is complete ; but it should for some time be kept covered from the air with linen. I never knew the pain return ; but if it should, the salt and vinegar must be applied as before. Should the burn be on a part that cannot be put into water, however painful it may be, it should be kept wet with soft rags out of cold water, till the mixture can be got ready, which with poor people may sometimes be a good while, as they have not always vinegar at hand. The water will gene-

rally prevent a blister ; but, should one rise, be careful not to cut it : if you do, it will certainly produce a sore. And if the scald should be on the foot or leg, be sure not to pull off the stocking till you take it out of the water.

Lady. I understand you perfectly, and shall now be glad to know how your good mistress treated bruises.

Sarah. She cured them with equal ease and certainty. A horse trod upon a poor man's foot one market day, it happened near our door ; and his shoe being torn and his foot badly crushed, she had him brought into the house, and his leg put into a pail of warm water as soon as it could be got ready ; it was kept constantly warm, by every now and then putting in a little that was hot. His foot by degrees became quite easy ; but we did not take it out of the water in less than two hours. It was then wrapped in soft rags, and he was able to walk home : but my mistress charged him to

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keep his foot upon a stool or chair whenever he sat down, walking upon it as little as possible for a few days, and whenever it grew painful to put it again into warm water. By using these means, and taking a few doses of cooling physic, (which my mistress always gave to those who had bad burns or bruises,) he was able to return to his usual business in a few days; while another neighbour of ours, who met with the same accident, was confined for many weeks, and had a large bill to pay to the doctor besides.

I remember, too, another accident which happened at our house. A young lady was carrying her work-box down stairs, and, falling, got what appeared a very dangerous crush upon her breast: but we got warm water, and, with soft cloths, kept bathing it for near two hours; after which it was covered with linen, and flannel over that, and she never felt any thing more of it.

I once got a very bad strain by reaching down some earthen ware from a shelf above my head. I felt little pain at first; but my arm soon began to grow stiff, and would probably have become quite useless: but my good mistress applied to her old remedy, and went on for her usual time putting on one flannel after another, out of water as hot as I could well bear it: after this she rubbed the part over with spirits, and covering it with dry flannel, I scarcely felt it afterwards.

Another excellent way of curing crushes and bruises is by pounding socotorine aloes and mixing them thick with water, to use them on the crush exactly as you do the salt and vinegar on a burn, and continuing the application for as long a time. A poor boy who one day shut a heavy door upon his fingers, and was in dreadful pain, was completely cured by this being done, and repeated whenever the pain returned, and his hand

being kept covered with linen was well in a few days. But where aloe cannot be had immediately, warm water seems to draw out the crush or bruise nearly as well; and many a hard blow and bad fall have I cured in my own children, by bathing the part plentifully even with cold water only.

Lady. I thank you for these valuable receipts, which I shall gladly try whenever an opportunity offers, and must now beg you to go on with the account you were giving of yourself.

Sarah. My mistress, madam, was good not only in one or two things, but in every thing. I had not been three days in the house before she began to teach me to read; and from that time she never let a day pass without a lesson, even if I had only time to stay ten minutes. Several young friends and relations used to come in turns to visit her, so that she was seldom a week together alone; yet hardly a day passed in which

I was not called into the parlour to hear her or one of the young ladies read in the Bible or some other good book; which, as my mistress always stopped to explain the parts that I did not understand, soon became very pleasant to me. She read such fine prayers too, that, had it not been for Jenny, who filled my head with abundance of other things, I should have gone to bed every night resolving to do my duty upon earth, that I might hereafter be a saint in heaven.

Lady. And is it possible that this wicked girl, for I can call her by no better name, should have such power over you, as to render all your excellent mistress's endeavours to serve you useless?

Sarah. Not so, madam; for to what I learnt from her, I owe my escape from the deepest guilt and ruin. She impressed upon my mind such a dread of acting wickedly, that I firmly resolved never to do it, and prayed earnestly to God that he would "deliver me from evil."

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but I foolishly thought there could be no harm in going now and then to chat with Jenny at the Eagles; and I had been so used all my life to making false excuses, that I almost persuaded myself that they were harmless; and, though I every day told my mistress some trifle that was not true, should have been enraged with any one who had called me a liar.

Lady. In this manner, my good Sarah, do too many go on, wavering between "God and Mammon;" shutting their eyes upon their faults, and walking as it were on the edge of a dangerous pit, till some great temptation comes, and they fall into it.

Sarah. Often and often has my dear mistress talked to me as you now do; and sometimes on a Sunday, when our good minister exhorted us to come with willing hearts to Christ, and, by earnestly striving to do the will of his heavenly Father, acknowledge him for our Saviour; when

he has told us how pure and how perfect a true christian life must be, the tears have rolled down my cheeks; and my chief sin rising up before me, I would resolve never to be guilty of another falsehood; and I think I should have kept my resolution, but for one of those great temptations which you have just mentioned.

I became acquainted with a young man who was waiter at the Eagles; he was also very intimate with Jenny; and, pretending to be my sweetheart, told me that he had an uncle who could give him a great sum of money, with which he hoped soon to take a public-house, and set up for himself. This I thought was a fine prospect for me; and as I very much liked him, I went to the Eagles more than ever, and of course had continual occasion for my lying excuses, to account for my frequent absences from home.

Andrew told me, that as his uncle must know nothing of our intended marriage, he could not come to see me with the knowledge of my mistress, but pressed me very much to admit him privately, which I at first refused to do: but as he complained of it as a great hardship, and I was loth to lose so good a match; I at last agreed that he should sometimes come in an evening, if he would go away before supper-time; for I resolutely denied to let him come at night, though he said it was the only time he could conveniently be spared: but I knew, that would ruin my character, and make even my lover think lightly of me.

Well, madam, I went on, as you justly observe, hating between God and Mammon, for many weeks: my conscience often told me that I was doing wrong; but Jenny and Andrew laughed at my scruples, and said I should never rise in the world by following the old-fashioned advice of such a one as my mistress. I

well knew, however, that she was right, and they wrong ; but I hoped to advance my fortune by marrying, and then to reconcile myself to God by doing my duty for the remainder of my life.

Lady. Nothing can be more common than for people thus fatally to deceive themselves. They intend to act well at some *future time*, but have always an excuse for indulging *at present* in doing something that seems more pleasant, or more profitable, than their duty. But when this future time comes, it brings new temptations with it ; and thus they proceed, step by step, till sin becomes habitual. Finding it more and more difficult to reform, sickness or old age comes on before their useless intentions of amendment are put into practice ; and their last hours are filled with remorse and anguish, instead of being cheered by the recollection of a well-spent life, and the glorious hopes of a blessed eternity. Go on, however, with your story,

and at all events be thankful that you were prevented from marrying a bad man.

Sarah. I told you, madam, that Andrew sometimes came to me in an evening; and on one of these occasions, my mistress coming unexpectedly into the kitchen, he hid himself behind a door; but she had heard or seen something of him, and asked if I had not somebody with me. I answered that I was sitting quite alone. "I hope, Sarah," said she, "you would not tell me a deliberate falsehood. Take time to think; and remember that God hears you." Though I felt these solemn words at the bottom of my heart, yet I again assured her that no one had been with me; when, to my utter confusion, she went to the very spot where he stood, and appearing both shocked and grieved, after a moment's silence bade him instantly leave the house; which he did, without speaking a word.

When my mistress turned her eyes upon me, I thought I should have sunk into the earth, and trembled from head to foot. Perceiving my condition, she sat down, and with her usual goodness bade me do the same. O madam, if I could tell you all that she then said to me, and you could hear the kind yet solemn manner in which she spoke, I know it would reach your heart, as it did mine at that moment. I own with shame, that it had not the effect which it ought to have had upon my conduct; but to my dying day shall I remember the awful warning that she gave me, to take heed unto my ways; to assure myself that no lying hypocrite, no artful deceiver, will inherit the kingdom of heaven; and that, even if I looked only to this world, such conduct as mine was likely to prove my ruin; as no man who intended honourably would persuade me to act in a manner so disgraceful to my character.

I wept bitterly, and promised to do whatever she advised in future, if she would allow me to remain in my place. She told me that she would take the night to consider of it, and give me an answer in the morning. Never shall I forget the prayer of that evening; I am sure my dear mistress thought of me, when she so fervently besought God to fill our hearts with the *spirit and love of truth*.

I hardly closed my eyes all night. Sometimes I felt fully resolved to give myself entirely to God and goodness, by openly and honestly confessing my faults to him and to my mistress, and from that hour giving up all bad connexions. Then the thoughts of Andrew, who, though I continually saw him doing wrong, and tempting me to do the same, I foolishly fancied had a good heart, would come into my mind; and it seemed very hard to give up such a fine prospect of happiness and prosperity as I should

have in marrying him. But then again I thought, if I was to gain all that this world could give, it would last only for a few years; while, by devoting myself entirely to my duty, and leaving all that might happen in this life to the will of God, I should secure everlasting happiness in heaven. O madam! I knew that this was *far better*; and when I got up in the morning, I thought I had fully resolved so to do: but upon opening the street door, the first person I saw was Andrew; and he said so many kind things, and showed such grief when I told him what I intended, that I could not help weeping. He then said, that if I would leave my place, and go with him to our wakes, which was the next week, the banns for our marriage should be immediately put up, and I could stay with my mother till his month was out at the Eagles, when, without more delay, he would marry me: but if I cruelly refused to do this, he would not stay at

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home to die of grief, but that very day enlist for a soldier, and go into the hottest battle, that death might cure him of his misery. This overcame all my good resolutions; I could resist no longer; but promising, as usual, to conceal every thing from my mistress, I agreed to do as he desired.

Lady. Ah, Sarah, you ought to have known, that where there is concealment there must be something wrong. "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd: But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Sarah. I soon found that to be true: found it to my heavy cost, as you shall now hear. My good mistress, soon after breakfast, calling me to her, asked me whether I was prepared to make a full confession of my faults, and to give up all connexion with those persons who

had led me into them. I was silent; for I could not return the answer that I ought to have done; and she immediately after, paying me my full wages, told me that I must leave her house that very day.

I was cut to the heart; but unless I had again altered my designs, what could I say? I did nothing but weep; and when I had packed up my clothes, and went to the parlour-door to take my leave, I was unable to speak. The dear lady never gave me a reproachful word, but again earnestly bade me beware of those who encouraged me to be a hypocrite and a deceiver, and had already separated me from a true friend. I left her with a heavy heart, and went straight to a house where I used sometimes to meet Andrew and Jenny: there I staid a few nights, passing a part of every day at the Eagles, and trying, by mirth and diversion, to drive away thought. The following week we went

to the wakes : but, O madam, I cannot tell you the hateful particulars of what happened there. I found that the wicked Andrew had never intended to marry me, but that he and Jenny, whom he had before deluded, had joined in a scheme for my destruction. Through the mercy of God, and the excellent advice of my good mistress, which had put me on my guard, I escaped from their net ; they were not able to make me the wicked wretch they intended. But though I escaped from guilt, I could not from disgrace ; they told a thousand lies of me, which utterly ruined my character, and prevented my having a chance of getting into a decent place : so I remained several months with my poor mother, in a half-distracted state. She was unable even to maintain herself, and of course had nothing to spare for me ; and as I had always been too fond of dress to have much money beforehand, I had nearly spent my last shilling, when

David Williams made me an offer of marriage; and I became his wife, chiefly because I saw no better means of procuring bread.

It is now nine years since all this happened, and so long have I been living here in labour and sorrow. I have seven children, who would be sensible and good; but I have forgotten all that my dear mistress taught me, and their father never knew a letter in his life: so, as we are very short of money, I have not even the means of having them taught to read; and the poor things are growing up rude and ignorant, with little chance of making better men and women than their father and mother now are.

Lady. I am much affected with the little history that you have given me. How fully does it prove the danger of allowing ourselves to practise what we call small faults! and among these, I know none so greatly to be dreaded as every kind of falsehood and deceit. Our

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heavenly Father is truth. Jesus, his beloved and anointed, came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Remember, then, that when you depart from truth, you renounce God as your Father, and Christ as your Saviour. If you would tremble to do this, beware of every approach towards a lie.

Had you been directed by our excellent mistress, how good and happy might you now have been : either living in ease and comfort in her service, and assisting in all her works of charity, or as the prudent and industrious wife of some worthy man ; for no discreet and modest young woman can fail to have the offer of such a one, if she performs well the duties of her single station, and resolutely avoids the company of idle and dissolute people. These opportunities of doing well are unhappily over with you ; but still much may be done to better your condition, and I will gladly give you my best advice and help towards it.

Sarah. Thank you, thank you, madam. Your kindness makes me weep; it is so like that of my dear mistress,

Lady. In the first place, my good Sarah, be truly grateful to God, for having preserved you from the sinful state into which your false friend, and pretended lover, hoped to plunge you. Never can you be thankful enough for such a deliverance from vice in this world, and punishment in the next. You have the comfort of knowing that the shameful things they have reported of you are false: and if others give credit to them, you must patiently bear the disgrace, as a misfortune which you brought upon yourself by keeping bad company.

Sarah. It is to God, and the advice and warnings of my good mistress, that I owe my escape from vice, and I will strive to be more grateful for it than I have been.

Lady. To love the "giver of all good gifts," is the prime duty of our

lives. And in order to fulfil this "*first and great commandment*," we must from day to day meditate upon the unmerited blessings which he has already bestowed upon us, and still more upon those infinitely greater and more precious, which are hereafter to be the portion, and "*exceeding great reward*," of all his faithful servants. Without continually thinking of God, and striving every hour to do his will, it is a vain pretence to say that we love him.

Sarah. O madam, I can love and thank him with my heart; but how can such a poor ignorant creature as I pretend to serve him? I have no power or means to do good.

Lady. I will tell you how. By being content with your hard condition; and striving cheerfully to perform the duties of it. By being a kind and faithful wife, bearing with the faults, and cherishing the good qualities, of your husband. By carefully attending to your children, and

teaching them to be pious, honest, and good-tempered. By being diligent in your business, frugal and clean in your house, and by doing all the good you can to every one within your reach, whether he is rich or poor.

All these great and material duties may be done by a poor and ignorant woman; and if she does them to the utmost of her power, she will secure to herself increasing comfort in this world, and a glorious prospect of never-ending happiness in that which is to come.

Sarah. Dear madam, how you encourage me! I never thought a poor person had the power to do any good: but now I see it does not all depend upon riches. Indeed you have done more for me this morning than if you had given me many pounds.

Lady. Will you then act up to the advice that I have been giving you? Will you hearken to our heavenly Teacher, and diligently "strive to enter in at the strait gate?"

Sarah. To the utmost of my power I will. But you must teach and direct me in the great work which I am undertaking.

Lady. Most gladly will I give you every help that is in my power; and may our heavenly Father give his blessing, to crown and prosper our endeavours! You must begin with being perfectly reconciled to your neighbour, and doing all in your power to make her love you and your children.

Sarah. Ah, madam! she is very proud, and passionate, and has no pity or kindness in her. She will not even sell me a drop of milk; and gives to her pigs what I and my poor children would be thankful for.

Lady. This may be because you have not tried to please and oblige her. There is never much quarrelling among neighbours, without some faults on both sides.

Sarah. Why, I must own, when we first came here, we thought it hard that they should have the orchard and garden that used to belong to this house, while we had only a piece of waste ground, which cost us a great deal of expense and labour before it brought back any thing ; and what is still worse, an excellent pump, which was for the use of both families, is now railed into their fold, and I or my children are obliged to go almost half a mile for every drop of water that we use. These things, and their proud behaviour, made us very angry, and I will own that we were provoked to do many spiteful things by them. Indeed my husband often said we should do but right to make them weary of their lives, and so drive them from the place. But Mrs. Bennet, who was the 'Squire's nurse, complained to him, and we had notice to quit ; which we must have done, if I had not gone myself and faithfully promised that he should give them no more cause of offence.

Lady. I hope you are fully sensible that both yourself and your husband have in this been much to blame; and as the first proof of sincere repentance, you must, from your heart, forgive them all the injuries they have done or intended to do you; and in future, instead of abusing and quarrelling with them, you must take pains to speak in the most civil and good-tempered manner whenever you meet; and watch for opportunities of doing any of those little kindnesses which ought to pass between persons who live near to each other. Be very careful, too, to keep your children from being noisy and troublesome to them: you cannot conceive the pain that elderly or sickly people endure, when exposed to the disturbance of rude children.

Sarah. I believe you say truly, madam; and I am ashamed to own, that I have often pleased myself with thinking how Mrs. Bennet has been teased with mine.

Lady. To take pleasure in the unhappiness of any fellow-creature, shows a most unchristian spirit. Remember, dear Sarah, who it is that says, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use and persecute you." By following this noble precept (and without following it you can be no disciple of Christ) you will gain much good-will, and perhaps turn enemies into friends. But should any hold out, and return evil for your constant good-will and kindness, be not discouraged; but still go on doing them all the good in your power; so shall you and your babes be the children of Him who is patient and long-suffering, even to the ungodly, and has promised to "forgive our trespasses, if we forgive those who trespass against us."

Sarah. I see, dear madam, that your counsel is good; I will lay it up in my heart, and strive to follow it. I will behave respectfully to Mrs. Bennet, and

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teach my children to do the same; nor shall they ever again take an apple from her trees, or bring in a single egg; that I am not certain is my own.

Lady. And did you indeed suffer them to do such things? Did you not reflect, that no one becomes desperately wicked at once; but that all those miserable creatures who are transported into slavery, or lose their lives upon the gallows, were once innocent children, who might have been trained for heaven; and that there can be no doubt that many of them were first corrupted, by their parents encouraging them, while young, in what are called small crimes?

Sarah. O madam, you make me tremble. I now see that I have been very wicked; and had I gone on, dreadful might have been the consequence to these poor infants. . . You have opened my eyes to all the guilt and ruin that I was bringing upon them, and with the help of God I will this very day begin a

different course. If an apple or a plum falls over the hedge, it shall be carefully picked up, and given to the right owner; and not an egg shall be brought into my house, that I am not sure was laid by my own fowls. I will resolve rather to lose ten, than take one that belongs to another person. God forbid that I should train up my children to be thieves!

Lady. Honesty, strict honesty, and a love of truth, should be firmly fixed in the minds of children. But as a foundation for all that is right and good, teach them early to know and love their Maker.

Sarah. Ah, madam, how can one so ignorant as I am be able to do that? If I could read the Bible, I would make it a part of my daily business to learn from it both their duty and my own. But, alas! that precious book is shut up from me. The Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, my dear mistress taught me to repeat, and I have not forgotten

them ; but more than these I am unable to teach my children,

Lady. It is a real misfortune not to know how to read. But notwithstanding this, you are acquainted with much that will instruct and improve your little ones. You can tell them that there is a very great and good God, who made the world and every thing that is in it ; who gave them life, who sees them every moment, hears every word that they speak, and knows the very thoughts of their hearts ; and that this great Being will certainly reward or punish them according as their thoughts, words, and actions have been good or evil.

Can any one who knows these great and important truths say, that she is too ignorant to instruct her children ? But you can go still further. When what I have already mentioned has been firmly fixed in their hearts and memories, which it will be if you take all proper opportunities of impressing it upon them, you will

go on to tell them, that God sent Jesus Christ, the holiest and best of men, into the world, to teach us what we must do to be saved ; that he was put to death by wicked men, but raised from the grave by his heavenly Father ; and after remaining forty days upon earth, more fully to instruct and strengthen his true disciples, he was gloriously taken up into heaven ; from whence he will come to raise the dead, and call them to a solemn and awful account for all their deeds ; “for God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world, by that man whom he hath ordained.”

You know all these things ; and if you diligently strive to teach them to your children, always speaking on these subjects with kindness, and in a spirit of love, doubt not but God will give a blessing to and prosper your pious endeavours.

Sarah. O madam, you have opened a new world to my view, and I trust I

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shall live as a new creature in it. I see that I may, through the great mercy of God, save my own soul, and greatly help my children, even though I am unable to read. Should I not teach them to pray ?

Lady. By all means. As soon as a child can speak, it should be taught a few words easily to be understood, in which to address its Maker.

The widow then took out her pocket-book, and with a pencil wrote the following prayer for a child from three to five years old :

“ O most great and glorious God, hearken, I beseech thee, to my humble prayer ; bless and keep all my friends, and make me love and obey thee better and better every day that I live.”

This prayer she read over and over, till Sarah could repeat it perfectly ; advising her to teach it first to the eldest, and then to all the rest ; never omitting to kneel down in the midst of them her-

self every evening, to say the Lord's Prayer; always concluding with words like these:—"May God bless you all, my dear children, and grant that you may grow up good men and women!"

Sarah. I can never be thankful enough to you, madam, for coming thus like an angel from heaven, to save me and my poor little ones.

Lady. Let all your thanks, my good Sarah, be paid to God. I am only endeavouring to obey him, when I seek to be useful to you: therefore to Him alone be all the praise. My life has of late been a sorrowful one. I have for many weeks been selfish, and thought of nothing but my own griefs: but our merciful Father is now teaching me, that it is my duty and my happiness not to live unto myself, but, pressing forward in the blessed path marked out by my heavenly Teacher, seek not to do my own wayward will, "but the will of him who sent me."

Your virtuous resolutions gladden my heart, and you shall have all the assistance in my power to give, towards putting them into steady and regular practice. What kind of man is your husband? I fear, not altogether such as you could wish.

Sarah. Ah, madam! he goes too much to the public-house upon the green, to be a good husband to me, or a good father to his children. But I have been too faulty myself, to leave me any right to complain of him: but when he sees that I am grown better, and the children better, who knows but he may mend also?

Lady. It is very likely that he will; for there is great power in a good example, especially if you always treat him with good temper and kindness, and strive to make his house comfortable to him. It is, however, very difficult to get the better of bad habits, and you must have much patience and forbear-

ance: but if you are able to go on, and steadily act this virtuous part, a truly Christian wife can hardly fail in the end to convert her husband.

Sarah. God has long been patient with my many sins and faults, and I will bear patiently with my husband, till He is pleased to give a blessing to my endeavours to turn his heart,

Lady. You are no doubt desirous that your children should lose no time in learning to read, and I will pay for the two eldest at the village school.

Sarah. Ah, madam! I thank you a thousand times for this great kindness; my little James has long been wishing to go, and I pray that a blessing may go with him; for the first day in which he reads a chapter in the Bible will be the happiest of his mother's life. Every night, dear madam, will I pray for you upon my bended knees.

Lady. I gladly accept your prayers, dear Sarah; but all your thanks are due

to Him who alone can prosper my endeavours.

I have one thing more to speak of, and must then leave you for the present. How do you spend your Sundays?

Sarah. Little better than the rest of the week.—With my poor husband, indeed, it is generally worse, for he often passes most part of the day at the public-house; and as for me and my children, we put on clean clothes, indeed, and we do no work, but we hardly know what the inside of a place of worship is. I have always a young child, or two, to attend to; and the rest are unwilling to go without me: so it is a day in which nothing goes forward, either for this world or the next.

Lady. A melancholy account indeed! I hardly thought any decent families had spent such Sundays in this Christian country. How different would it be, if your husband was a sober and religious man! He might then take the

elder children on Sunday mornings to whatever place of worship you approve, and you might do the same in the afternoon, while he remained at home. Thus both would have the opportunity of joining their Christian neighbours in prayer and thanksgiving, once in every week, and your children would be instructed in their duty, and trained up in those good habits which will ensure their comfort in this world, and lead to salvation in the next. How delightful would it be, after the evening service, to sit down to your tea or coffee with your little family about you, your husband and yourself recollecting the texts and subjects of the sermons and chapters which you had that day heard, and questioning the children, to find whether they had understood any part of them, and, as far you were able, to explain and make it useful to them!

Sarah. Ah, madam! such a Sunday would seem a little heaven upon earth to

me. But I can join in no prayers, nor hear a single sermon the whole year round, nor have I any means of sending the children. Yet, now I think of it, I might get my poor old mother to come now and then in an evening, and take care of the young ones, while I go with the three eldest. I am sure she would do this at any time. So I will go this very day, and ask her for next Sunday.

Lady. I approve very highly of this plan, and have no doubt but you will reap much benefit and comfort from it. And thus it will always be: when we are truly desirous of learning our duty, God never fails to furnish us with the means. Let me, however, remind you, my dear Sarah, that it is of little use to attend a place of public worship, without first preparing our minds for this solemn duty, by freeing them, as far as possible, not only from the vices and bad passions, but from the follies, vanities, and troubles, of the present world. Steadily

endeavour to do this ; and when the service begins, let your heart go with every word that you hear or utter ; always remembering, that when you pray, you are speaking to that *Almighty Being* in whose hand is the life of every creature. When the Scriptures are read, or the sermon delivered, attend to them as closely as you are able, that you may from time to time gain a precious hoard of that knowledge which will make you "wise unto salvation." As you return home, think of all that you have heard ; and when there, show, by the gentleness and humility of your conduct and manners, that a religious impression remains upon your mind. Thus will your attendance on the public worship of God become truly beneficial to yourself, and to your family ; nay, more, your good example may induce others to walk in the same path, and you may be the happy means of leading many to righteousness.

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Saying this, the worthy widow departed, with a heart overflowing with gratitude to God for the good success which appeared likely, a second time, to attend her charitable endeavours to raise a family of his children from a state of ignorance and vice, to be the disciples and followers of his beloved Son; and through faith in the gracious promises of the Gospel, and obedience to its holy precepts, the future inheritors of a glorious heavenly kingdom.

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART III.

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THEY who have read the first part of the Village Dialogues, will perhaps wish to be informed, whether the good widow succeeded in her hope of reforming the hearts and lives of those of her poor neighbours, with whom she first conversed; or whether, as I fear is sometimes the case, after appearing sensible of their faults, and resolved to make a thorough change, they were again drawn aside by the power of evil habits, or the temptations of a world in which there are too many, who chiefly, if not entirely, confine their attention to the things of the present day, while they neglect the

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far weightier concerns of a state towards which every rising morn, and every closing eve, carries us swiftly forward?

Before I proceed to satisfy thy curiosity with respect to these villagers, let me ask thee, my reader, or rather let me earnestly entreat thee to *ask thyself*, whether this is thy own case? Look into thine heart and conduct, and answer his momentous question.—“Is the life thou art now leading, such as will prepare thee for the pure enjoyments of heaven? or art thou trifling away thy time and talents in thoughtlessness, wordly mindedness, or what is still worse, in indulging any of those sinful habits which degrade thy nature, and sink thee below the level of the brutes that perish!” Reply truly and seriously to this solemn inquiry; and think, while time and opportunity for repentance and amendment still remain, that life and death are set before thee, and upon the regulation of thine own heart and con-

duct, thy fate depends: for "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, *consider your ways*; seek good and not evil, that ye may live; and the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you."

The day after that in which the late sorrowful, but now reviving widow, had visited the gardener's cottage, Thomas's wife came, according to her direction, to fetch some broth for her husband, when the following short dialogue passed between them.

Lady. How is your husband, my good woman?

Jane. Why indeed, madam, I hardly know what answer to make you; he seems better, and he says he is better, and yet I think he is for death.

Lady. And why do you think so? tell me, and I may perhaps be able to remove your fears.

Jane. Why, Madam, you know he is naturally cross and passionate, and since his illness I have had enough to do

to please, or indeed to live with him at any rate ; and as for the children, I have been forced to keep them most part of the day out of doors, for he would not bear the least noise ; but yesterday, when I went up stairs with the dinner that you sent him, he spoke to me in such a manner as I have heard nothing like it for many a year. He asked me to sit down and partake with him ; and when I refused, and said I hoped it would do him good, he took hold of my hand so kindly, and said, " Dear Jane, I hope never again to have any good thing without you and my children sharing it with me." I looked at him with such surprise that I could not speak ; and more when I saw tears come into his eyes. " What is the matter with you, Thomas," said I, " I am afraid you are growing worse, do try to eat something ; and to please him I helped myself to a little, and he went on talking in the same kind way, so that I wondered what

could be the matter. After dinner he seemed weak, and I asked him to lie down upon the bed, and brought my own large handkerchief to lay over his head; as I put it on, he again took hold of my hand, and pressing it between both his, said, "dear Jane," in such a way, that it went quite to my heart. Well, Madam, I went down stairs wondering at all this, and took particular care to keep the house quiet, for I thought to myself, perhaps poor Thomas may not have many times more to sleep in this world. About five in the evening he knocked with a stick upon the floor, and I went up to him; he was sitting upon the bed, and in the same kind and gentle voice, told me that he had been asleep, and should now be glad of a dish of coffee; adding, "let the children come up and have some with us; I will not be so cross with them again as I used to be." This surprised me more than all, for he was always grum-

bling and complaining about them, and wishing they were old enough to be sent out to work. I went down however, and called them into the house, and as he often found fault with them for being dirty, I washed their hands and faces, and as soon as I had boiled the coffee, took them up to him. He kissed them all, and put the youngest to sit upon the bed by him, and afterwards gave each a biscuit out of the paper which you sent him, and some coffee out of his own cup. Unluckily, little Tommy, while I was looking another way, threw down a plate, which broke into twenty pieces; but when I was going to beat him, my husband caught hold of my arm, and said, "do not strike him, he intended no harm, and we will forgive him if he promises to be more careful for the future." Well, I wondered more than ever, for he used to be the first to punish the poor things, but as I did not then like to vex him, I let the boy go, though I know it was wrong to do so.

Lady. I do not think so. If your child had broken the plate on purpose, you ought to have corrected him; but as it was an accident, and might have happened to yourself, what his father did was quite right; and I would advise you as much as possible to avoid beating your children, it only hardens, and makes them passionate and ill-tempered.

Jane. But what else can I do, Madam; I cannot let them be their own masters, and I do not like to keep them from their meals, for they have little enough to eat at all times.

Lady. You are right never to deprive them of their food. But there are many ways of punishing, without beating or starving them; and much less correction would be necessary, if parents were careful not to be passionate and ill-tempered themselves; for whether it be good or bad, children will imitate what they continually see.

Jane. Then ours have a poor chance, for both Thomas and I are very passionate. But as I was telling you, Madam, he was last night so mild and good humoured, that he hardly seemed the same person; and after I went to bed I could not sleep for thinking of it, till it came into my mind that this was a change before death. And to be sure it must be so, for what else could thus all on a sudden make him quite like another man.

Lady. I will tell you, my good Jane, —God has touched his heart. He sees the folly and wickedness of his past life, and is resolved to become “a new creature.” This is no sign of approaching death; for when life is near its close, even if our senses continue perfect, we can hardly hope to have sufficient strength or ability of any kind, to enable us to bring about a material change in ourselves. The sinner on his death-bed can seldom do more than confess and

ament over the guilt of his past life ; and should your husband now leave the world, we could not be certain that his contrition is sincere. But I trust that God will mercifully prolong his time of trial, that he may do “works worthy of repentance,” and by degrees be fitted for the great change which death will make in our condition.

Jane. I wish it may be so, but I fear when he recovers his health and gets amongst his old companions, he will forget all this goodness, which has come so suddenly over him ; and become just as bad as ever.

Lady. There is great and serious danger of that. But you may do much towards preventing it, by a careful attention to your own conduct. Try to oblige and please him in every thing, and teach your children to do the same ; this will encourage him to give up his old companions and bad habits ; and you

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may yet live many happy years together, after all your disagreements.

Jane shook her head and made no answer, and the widow, thinking she had said enough at this time, gave her some broth, and a small white loaf for her husband, and bidding her good day, the woman departed.

The account which she had just received of Thomas's altered conduct, was highly gratifying to the benevolent widow, and after lifting up her heart in thankfulness to Him "whose favour is better than life," and to whose approbation she looked as the sweet reward of her virtuous exertions, she sat down to consider how she could most profitably employ the remainder of the day.

Her thoughts immediately turned to the gardener's family: she felt much compassionate kindness for poor Sarah, and resolved to use her utmost endeavours to reconcile her to her neighbour, and if possible make them a mutual com-

fort and advantage to each other. She had heard that Mrs. Bennet did various kinds of needle work for hire, and resolving, as an introduction, to employ her in some trifle, sent her servant to request that she would come to her that afternoon for particular directions. She came accordingly, and after the business was settled, the lady, in her usual kind and obliging manner, desired her to stay and take an early dish of tea with her, and after some chat upon indifferent subjects, for she did not wish her to suspect the real purpose of the visit; "your house" said she, "stands upon a pretty pleasant spot, and you seem to have an excellent garden and orchard."

Mrs. Bennet. Yes, Madam, our house, for a small place, is very comfortable, and we have plenty of fruit and garden stuff for our own use, and a little to sell. Indeed, I should upon the whole think myself well off, but for our next door neighbours, who are such low,

noisy, dishonest people, that there is no living peaceably by them. I was quite shocked and ashamed that you should the other day find me demeaning myself so much as to quarrel with that woman.

Lady. I was sorry too, because I think that by kindness and good nature you might gain an influence over her, which would be a comfort to you, and a great advantage to her.

Mrs. Bennet. If they had been people of good character, I certainly should have noticed them, and perhaps they might in some things have been useful to me; but David Williams is an abusive drunken fellow, and it is well known that Sally Dean, who, though she is now so poor a slattern, was then a smart clever girl, would never have married him if she had not so lost her character with a profligate man who was waiter at the Eagles, that she had no chance of getting into a creditable service.

Lady. She was indeed very much to blame in that affair; but I believe

many lies were told to blacken and ruin her character by the wicked man himself, when he could not succeed in his designs upon her.

Mrs. Bennet. That may be, but it is well known that she left her place at a day's warning, and such a mistress as she had would not have used her so without good reason.

Lady. It is true, she admitted the man you mentioned secretly into the house, and when this was found out, told a direct lie, and persisted in it; which, with her refusing to give up all connexion with him, fully justified her mistress for acting as she did. But for this ill conduct she has suffered long and heavily, and she now appears truly sensible of, and sorry for her faults.

Mrs. Bennet. It is easy to guess from whom you had this account. But as she owned herself a *liar*, I wonder that you, Madam, would hearken to any thing that she could say.

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Lady. I perceive the force and truth of your remark. The miserable state of the liar is such, that he cannot expect to be believed, even when he speaks the truth. But there is a great appearance of penitence and sincerity about this woman, and it is our duty to assist and encourage a return to virtue in every fellow creature.

Mrs. Bennet. Ah, Madam, you do not know Sarah Williams as I do. She is a low dishonest woman. I resolved from the first of their coming to the house that I would have nothing to do with them, and all that I have since seen and heard, confirms my resolution.

Lady. In what respects have you found her dishonest?

Mrs. Bennet. In the worst of all ways, for she employs her children to rob me. If I was to tell you all the losses that I have had in my garden and orchard, and in my poultry, through them, you would hardly believe it.

Lady. But are you sure that their mother knew when they did these things? poor untaught children are too apt of themselves to be mischievous.

Mrs. Bennet. I cannot say that I have heard her bid them rob me, or that she went with them to do it; but I have no doubt of many of my apples having been put into her pies, and many of my eggs into her basket to be carried to market.

Lady. These are very wrong, and very provoking things, but much more hurtful to her and to her children than they can be to you. Did you ever talk to her of the great crime which she was committing, in thus training them up to vice from their very cradles?

Mrs. Bennet. I do not know that I have ever talked to her in that way, but I have often threatened to take her and them before the Squire. Indeed, I know that I have been too meek with them, as I told her yesterday, in not having done

so already ; but she may depend upon it I will take the very next opportunity.— The fittest place for such people is the House of Correction.

Lady. You do not see their conduct in the light in which a true christian would wish to look upon it. This poor woman cannot even read, and it is nine years since she left the excellent mistress who taught her all that she knows of right and wrong, and was the means of saving her from falling still much lower than her present sad condition. She married too, it appears, a man more likely to corrupt her principles than amend them, and who has kept her in a state of poverty which subjects her to many temptations, that can hardly be imagined by those who have always lived in plenty. When you consider all this, surely you will feel more pity than anger, and rather try to convince and cure her of her faults, than seek to punish her for them.

Mrs. Bennet. Indeed, Madam, I desire to have nothing at all to do with them. If I can do my duty, and pay every one their own, it is all that I pretend to, and I wish every one would do as much.

Lady. It is certainly right in the first place to see our own conduct, and to do full justice to every one with whom we deal. But when this is done, another and a very material part of our duty, is to be kind and friendly to our fellow-creatures, and particularly to use our best endeavours to instruct the ignorant, and reform the vicious.

Mrs. Bennet. To be sure, Madam, all this is quite right in you, and other ladies, who have knowledge, and time, and fortunes ; but from one like me, who works for her living, nothing of the kind can be expected.

Lady. Think of the poverty and hardships which this poor woman daily endures, without a single friend to assist,

or even advise her; and then think what a support and consolation such a neighbour as yourself might be to her.

Mrs. Bennet. Indeed, Madam, I have never been used to keep company with such as she. I have endeavoured to behave so as to be noticed by my betters: and I think the only way to live with peace and credit in this world, is to mind one's own affairs, and have nothing to do with those of other people; and indeed, Madam, I wonder why you should wish me to have any concerns with such a low beggarly family as that of David Williams.

Lady. For the best reason in the world, because I know that you might do them good. Suppose these poor people were related to you, suppose Sarah was the daughter of your brother or sister, and had fallen into poverty and wretchedness, would you not then feel it your duty to help her?

Mrs. Bennet. To be sure I should; for then she would have a natural claim upon me. I have more than once befriended my relations, and if she was my niece, I could help her in many ways without missing it myself, and it would be my duty so to do.

Lady. And are we not all of one family, the children of one merciful Father, and heirs together of one glorious inheritance? Did not Jesus, "the first-born of many brethren," the *first* whom God raised from the grave and endowed with *immortal* life;—he, whose spirit we should labour to imbibe, and whose conduct should be the object of our constant imitation;—Did not he select his apostles from among the poor, and preach the glad tidings of the gospel more especially to the poor? And shall we venture to call ourselves his disciples, while we despise those to whom he directed his chief attention and regards? Shall we be so blind, so low minded, as to think

any child of immortality, any heir of the heavenly kingdom, beneath our friendly care and attention? Should we not rather bow down in thankfulness to Him who hath placed our condition above want, and bestowed upon us the high privilege, of being his ministers for good, to our suffering brethren. Let us think justly, my dear Mrs. Bennet, of these things, and “not be high-minded, but condescend to men of low estate.”

Mrs. Bennet. To be sure, Madam, our religion teaches this.

Lady. And why do we not act upon it? It is useless to know the will of God without striving to perform it. Such servants, our Lord assures us, will be “beaten with many stripes.” The precepts of religion should be so written on our hearts, as to be always uppermost in our thoughts, and the guide of all our actions. This would make us kind and generous; we should think less of mere selfish gratifications, and more of promoting the

welfare and comfort of others. If we would be "as the elect of God, holy and beloved," we must "put on kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another."

Mrs. Bennet made no answer, and appeared so little affected by what she had heard, that the worthy Widow could hope for no good effect from saying more at this time. There is no forcing people to think, any more than to act right, and after conversing a short time upon indifferent subjects, they parted.

There are few things so likely to harden the heart, as pride; and few faults so difficult to cure, as a foolish opinion of our own merits. "The publicans and the harlots," says Jesus to the hypocritical and self-righteous pharisees, "go into the kingdom of heaven before you!" the grossest sinners are more likely to become penitent and reform, than those who are so wilfully blind as to justify,

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and even applaud themselves for their unrighteousness. The absence of good will as certainly exclude us from heaven, as the commission of evil ; though it will not call down an equal degree of punishment. Many persons, because they have been prudent, and therefore successful in their worldly concerns, and have been guilty of none of those vices which the world marks as disgraceful, are fully satisfied with themselves, and persuaded that no more is required from them. This was the case with Mrs. Bennet ; she had been an honest and useful servant, lived many years in the same place, saved a good sum of money, and married a sober and industrious man. After her marriage she continued equally notable, and living in frugal comfort, added every year considerably to her store. All this was well and commendable, but no more than mere *worldly* wisdom would have taught her ; it would have been folly to act otherwise, if there was no life beyond

the grave. But an humble candidate for heaven, would have looked beyond herself, and instead of avoiding her poor and ignorant neighbour, have tried to lighten her burdens by friendly assistance. She would sometimes have read to her from the sacred volume, and have taken her children to the house of prayer. "Stay with your infants," she would have said to the thankful mother, "God has committed them to your tenderest care, and you can think of him, and pray to him in your heart, while you are watching over them. If their clothes are whole and clean, it is all that I desire, for the rich and poor meet as equals to worship their heavenly Father, and he regardeth not their rank or their possessions. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth, for God looketh on the heart!"

How pleasing would it have been, to see Mrs. Bennet thus conducting the children of her neighbour to a place where they might be taught to lift their

young hearts to Him who made them, and have learned their duty to him, to their parents, and to all mankind. Would she not have appeared in the eyes of all beholders, far more respectable than the company of the finest lady in the parish could have made her? for bad as the world is, and little as the generality of people are disposed to practise it, genuine active goodness, never appears without being commended and admired.

Mrs. Bennet, however, had such mistaken notions, that she would have been ashamed to take these little creatures in their coarse coats and frocks as her companions to the house of prayer; nor did she think it her duty to assist their poor mother either to feed, clothe, or instruct them. Her maxim was, "Let every one take care of his own." But is this a christian maxim? Does it teach us to live according to the precepts of our master? No, no;—the religion of Christ gives no colour, affords no cloak

for selfishness : its essence is *love* ; love of God, shewing itself in acts of kindness to our fellow-creatures. And this love, this christian charity, must not be confined to our families, to our friends, or even to those whom we judge worthy ; “ For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye ? for sinners also love those who love them. And if ye do good to them who do good to you, what thank have ye ? for sinners do even the same. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again ; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest : for he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil.” “ Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”

The widow was disappointed, but not discouraged by her late ill success. She saw that Mrs. Bennet possessed one virtue which many good-hearted people suffer greatly from the want of, and that

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is, *prudence*. This had made her a good servant, and a good wife, and put her into a respectable situation in life. Surely, thought she, I shall by degrees be able to open her heart; and make her feel, that to confer benefits is a happiness as well as a duty; and that the understanding of that person must be strangely darkened and perverted, who thinks himself above serving and assisting the present wants and necessities of those highly favoured beings, within whose reach is placed a crown of unfading glory. Can one to whom these "great and precious promises" are made, be looked down upon with contempt by him who hopes to partake of them?

How trifling in reality is the difference between the prince and the peasant, when we know, that in a few short years, both will be laid in the silent grave, from whence they will rise as *equals*; each to be rewarded or punished according as his deeds have merited? Attend to this,

ye great ones of the earth, and let it teach you "not to think of yourselves above what ye ought to think;" "not to be high-minded, but fear." And let the poor and lowly reflect upon the great gifts which God has bestowed upon all his children, and looking carefully to their ways, so endure the trials and temptations which he suffers to befall them in this life, that when the great day of retribution comes, they may be found in the happy number of those who "came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb:" that is, who have purified themselves from sin, by obeying the holy precepts, and following the bright example of "him who loved, and gave himself for us."

The wife of Thomas came every day as she had been directed, to fetch something nourishing for her husband, and gave favourable accounts of his recovering health and amended disposition; but

one morning, just as the widow had finished her breakfast, the eldest child came to say that his father seemed to be very ill again, and begged her to come to him immediately. She readily complied with this request, and going back with the boy, found the poor man looking better in health, but appearing sorrowful and dejected. He respectfully placed a chair for her, and having sent the child out to play, spoke as follows.

Thomas. Ah, Madam! all is over with me: I undertook what I have not the power to perform. The strength of bad habits is more than I can get the better of, and I must give it up. Very wicked I hope I shall not again be, but I have lost all hope of being good.

Lady. How is this my friend? what can have happened so far to discourage, as to tempt you to forsake a road, which, though it may sometimes be difficult, you know leads up to heaven.

Thomas. My want of power to climb so high. If I had begun in early life, it would have been like setting out from level ground, with my full strength to assist me: but after living many years, as I have done, it is the same thing as labouring up the steep side of a miry pit, and every bad practice of my former life is like a weight of lead hung round my neck, which, when I attempt to rise, drags me down to the same wretched place where I was before. Alas, Madam! after all my hopes, resolutions, and promises, you see me now the same guilty creature that you first found me.

Lady. No, no; I see another man. I see one who hates his sins, and is sincerely sorry that he ever committed them. One who is, I trust, upon the very eve of reformation.

Thomas. You will not say so when I have told you all. You always thought, and still think too well of me. One so

good as you can form no notion of what wicked people and wicked habits are. I do indeed repent from the bottom of my soul, of all my unrighteous deeds, but I shall never reform, never get the better of my passions; I see and feel that but too plainly.

Lady. Tell me what it is that has thus discouraged you, and I shall know better what advice to give.

Thomas. Well, Madam, I will do so: indeed I wished to see you for that very purpose: but though I lament, and am ready to confess my faults, without I could get the better of them, I know the rest is nothing.

Lady. That is true, but sorrow and confession are the first steps towards amendment.

Thomas. It may be so, Madam, but I am a sad proof that it does not always follow after them. When I had well considered all your excellent advice and instruction, I felt that it was good, and

as I believed, was fully determined to give up every sin, and become in the true sense of our Lord's words, "a new creature;" and after I had made this resolution, I was happier than I had ever been before. I seemed to feel that God would forgive me all that was past, and I continually prayed him to direct and strengthen me in the time to come. I tried to behave kindly to my wife and children, and when I suffered from pain and sickness, to bear it patiently, and even to be thankful for all that my heavenly Father thought fit to send. Day after day passed thus happily; I gained bodily strength fast, and I hoped all difficulties of another kind were over; but, alas! yesterday has too well convinced me of the contrary. My wife in the morning quarrelled with one of her neighbours in the village, and coming home in a very ill humour, wanted me to join in the bad language with which she shamefully abused her. I refused to do

so, and told her that we ought patiently to bear with each other's faults, and as far as in us lay, "live peaceably with all men," for I had read that good precept in my Testament only the day before. But so far from being pacified by what I said, she grew still more angry, and said so many reproachful and cruel things, that I could hardly forbear returning them as I used to do. I did however get the better of myself, though the struggle cost me a return of the pain in my head and stomach. I never gave her an unkind word, yet she continued in a miserable humour, and in the evening was so noisy, and scolded, and beat the poor children till I could bear it no longer. When once I began to speak harshly to her, I lost all guard over myself, and—O! Madam, I will tell you all;—I mingled *oaths* with my reproaches, and even struck her. The moment I had done this, my conscience awoke within me, and seemed to say, "What

art thou doing, wretch? are these the words and actions of a christian? a follower of the meek and holy Jesus? does thy Bible teach or allow thee to act thus?

I sat down trembling from head to foot, in great bodily pain, but the anguish which I suffered in my mind was far worse, when I recollected all that I had said and done, how entirely I had forgotten all my good resolutions, all my promises to God and you. After a while, I tried to say something to soften my wife, but she told me that she had long suspected what my fine talking of religion would end in, and now saw plainly, that when I got well, I should be worse than ever. I attempted to say no more, and with difficulty crawling up stairs, went to bed. But, O! Madam, what a night did I pass there! Once when I dropped asleep, I thought I saw you in the form of an angel, reaching out your hand from the clouds, and inviting me to

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come to you : but when I strove to rise, I was pulled down deeper and deeper, into a black and horrible pit ! O Madam ! after this fearful dream, I could sleep no more. “ It is surely to be so,” said I, “ all that this dear lady has done to save me will come to nothing ! I shall return to my sins, and be lost in the pit of destruction !” This dreadful thought has tormented me ever since, and if you cannot give me comfort, all will soon be over in this world, and I shall go to receive the reward due to my evil deeds.

Lady. I can give you comfort, my friend, comfort from the true source,—from the sacred *word* of *God*.—“ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, unto our God, and he will abundantly pardon.”

Thomas. Ah ! Madam, can I resolve more earnestly and sincerely than I did before ? and yet how miserably have I

failed ! what the better am I for knowing what is right, unless I had the grace steadily to pursue it ?

Lady. Pray then, pray fervently for this grace, and doubt not but you will be heard. You have indeed proved the power of bad habits, how prone they are to return, and how weak a life of sinful indulgence leaves us. But be not cast down ; though you are weak, God is strong, and if you do your part, fear not but he will enable you to get the better of those evil inclinations which have hitherto been your masters. Once you loved and cherished, but now you hate and strive against them ; is not this a blessed change ? O my friend, be comforted with the happy assurance that you have already entered that strait and narrow road which leadeth unto life. Let the sad experience of yesterday make you more watchful, and every victory that you gain over yourself will add to your strength, till at length you

get habit on the side of virtue. When this is done, all hardship will be over, and you will reap the happy fruits of righteousness, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance!" All these truly christian virtues will dwell in your heart, and every day that you spend upon earth, will assist in preparing you for heaven.

Thomas. Thank you, thank you, madam, for your comfort and your counsel. I will strive to take heart, and begin my course again. The hardest things that I shall have to bear are, the taunts and reproaches of my wife, and the difficulty of bringing about any good change in the children, while she remains the same.

Lady. Look upon this, then, as a chief trial of your patience, and call forth your full strength to support it well. In a short time, I trust you will be able to return to your work, and when

she sees that you always come home sober and good tempered, and bring your full wages, depend upon it you will soon find an alteration in her; and, as you will then be able to send your children to school, they will be kept from harm, and learning what is good.

Thomas. You are, indeed, my good angel. You fill me with hope, and drive away my fears. But that dream: do you put any faith in dreams?

Lady. None, none at all. My faith rest solely on the *goodness*, the *mercy*, and the *promises*, of God. And as nothing can shake or alter these, what but a knowledge that my own ill conduct has cut me off from the benefit of them, what can have the power of troubling me? From the greatest to the least. all that happens upon earth, happens by his permission; and while this mighty, this all-powerful ruler is our *Father* and our *Friend*, what can we have to fear? Come what may, happy and secure is

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the condition of the real christian. He looks beyond the present scene, and may exclaim in the sublime language of the prophet, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Thomas. O Madam! how happy are you, in having led a life that enables you to repeat those words from your heart. Could I ever bring myself to a settled course of piety and goodness, I should not envy the king upon his throne. Do you think it possible for such a one as I, to reach that state of blessedness.

Lady. I do, my friend, I think it very possible; and I rejoice to see that you aim at such perfection. Keep God in all your thoughts, and you will every day draw nearer to him. Try to open

the understanding, and soften the hearts of your wife and children, and as I trust you will never disgrace your christian profession by such another scene as that of yesterday, assure yourself that he will prosper your pious endeavours for their good.

Thomas. What a blessing is a real friend, such a one as I have found in you! It was your goodness that awakened me from the state of carelessness and sin, in which I had lived for many years. Indeed, I may truly say, that till you explained it to me, I never knew what love to God, or to my fellow-creatures, meant. I went on from day to day, thinking only of what passed before my eyes, and trying to please my own wayward humours. But there is no comfort, no real satisfaction, in such a life: it is little better than that which is led by the beasts of the field. They can eat and drink and sleep as well as we. But you have taught me, and my Bible tells

me, that I was made for a higher and a nobler purpose ; that my great business in this world is, to fit myself for the next, by rooting out of my heart what is base, false, and wicked, and planting in its room all that is kind, and just, and true ; and notwithstanding my sin of yesterday, I will, by God's good help, endeavour to do this.

Lady. I will answer you in the words of the pious psalmist : " Wait thou upon God, trust in him at all times, pour out thine heart before him. In God is our salvation, and our glory ; the rock of our strength, our refuge is in God. Trust not in oppression nor in wrong, if riches increase, set not thine heart upon them ; for God hath spoken once, and twice have I heard the same—that *power belongeth unto God* : also unto the Lord *belongeth mercy*, for he rendereth to every man *according to his works.*"

Thomas. What a blessing to you, madam, has been the study of the scrip-

tures: you seem to know them almost by heart, and can, therefore, consult them every hour, and call them in to regulate every action of your life.

Lady. That has ever been my wish and aim; and I am anxious not only that you should do the same, but, that by degrees, you should make your family well acquainted with them. Your wife, I think, cannot read; therefore, you should take frequent opportunities of reading to her. At first, only a few verses at a time, and chosen from the plainest and most interesting parts; and let this never be done but when her temper is undisturbed, for your great object must be, to make her perceive that true religion is as delightful as it is profitable, and promotes our happiness in this world, while it secures it in the next.

Thomas. I understand you, Madam, and will treasure up your counsel in my heart. I am quite a different creature

from what I was when you came here this morning, for my precious hopes of heaven are returned, and my bodily strength seems to have come with them, for, at this moment, I scarcely feel that I ail any thing.

Jane now entered the kitchen, and the widow desiring her to sit down, spoke thus :

Lady. I rejoice to find your husband so much recovered, and hope, in a short time, he will be able to return to his work ; after which, I trust, you will forgive each other's faults, and live in more comfort than you have ever done before.

Jane. I wish it may be so, Madam, but I seldom see that people mend as they grow old ; they much oftener become worse, and I expect it to be so with Thomas.

Lady. The faults have not all been on his side, and if he is resolved to grow better, I hope you will gladly follow his good example.

Jane. Yes, yes, I may easily promise to be as good as he will. The very first money he gets, I know will go to the public-house.

Thomas. I cannot wonder that you should think so, because you can only judge from what I have been; but I hope the remainder of my life will prove me an altered man.

Jane. I don't like to expose you before Madam, or I would remind you of your fine behaviour yesterday. That shews how much you are altered.

Thomas. I own my fault, and have confessed it to God, and to this excellent lady. Forgive me, my dear Jane, and I trust you will never see the like again.

Jane. There is nothing so cheap as fine promises, they cost nothing at all; but the next time you get into a passion, I know what will be the end of them.

Thomas. You have had too much reason to think so, but I hope, in time,

to shew you how great a change religion can bring about.

Jane. To be sure, you have much right to talk of religion, after swearing as you did last night; and that, when you had been sitting half the day with the testament in your hand.

Thomas. I am heartily sorry and ashamed of what I did last night; but I hope to make you amends, by doing so no more.

Lady. Do not reproach your husband, but kindly forgive what is past, and endeavour to encourage and strengthen his good resolutions of amendment.

Jane. I hate nothing so much as to hear people talk about religion, who lead bad lives. I was never taught to read, but I know that the Bible is not a thing only to preach about, and to talk about, but to make us live in a sober and godly manner.

Lady. You think and speak most justly; that true religion which is ac-

ceptable in the sight of God our heavenly Father, will teach us "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world." In the same degree that we do this, in the degree that we do good to others, and are pure and holy in our own hearts and lives, may we account ourselves religious. "Little children," says the beloved apostle, "let no man deceive you, *he that doeth righteousness is righteous.*" "For *this* is the love of God, that *we keep his commandments.*"

Thomas. By that test, by the test which Christ himself hath given us, do I in future desire to be judged. "By their fruits ye shall know them," says our heavenly teacher. If I again frequent public-houses, spend the Lord's day in idle amusements, or use my wife and children harshly or passionately; then conclude me a hypocritical pretender to religion, for all such characters by their actions renounce Christ, whatever

their words may say. But if, by the powerful help of God, I am enabled to forsake my sins, let me, while on earth, be called by the glorious name of Christian, and look humbly forward, with trembling hope, to the second coming of my Lord, to wake the dead, and call them to his judgment-seat. O that I may then be numbered with the lowest of his followers, and cast myself before the throne of mercy.

Lady. Amen, my friend, from the bottom of my heart I say *Amen*. May you be enabled fully to perform all that you piously intend. May God "count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him."

The good widow's eyes filled with tears, and she left the cottage, after desiring Jane to come as usual for her husband's dinner every day, till he was able

to return to work; which she cautioned him not to do, till his strength was tolerably restored.

On her arrival at home, a letter was put into her hand, which informed her that her late husband's uncle, on his road from Ireland to Bath, had been taken dangerously ill at Shrewsbury, and having only servants about him, entreated her to come to him for a few weeks, as he had no doubt but her kind care, and the comfort of her company, would greatly contribute to his recovery.

Mr. Mansfield, the person from whom this letter came, had gone in early life to the island of Jamaica, where, by cultivating a large sugar plantation, he, in a course of years, gained a very considerable fortune; and, as increasing wealth made him wish for a little repose from the incessant attention which he had hitherto paid to business, he wrote to his brother, a worthy tradesman in Manchester, desiring him to send his only son,

who was at that time in his twentieth year, over to him, that he might relieve him of a part of his fatigue, and hereafter share in the increasing profits of their joint labours.

The brothers had never been upon very intimate terms, for their characters and pursuits had been widely different. The love of money, and the *selfish* enjoyments which money can purchase, had always been a chief object with the elder; while the younger, with a small capital, had early entered into business, married a worthy young woman with little fortune, and lived beloved and respected by all who knew him, for his liberal and honourable dealings, and for the friendly assistance which he was ever ready to bestow upon all who wanted, and came within the reach of his moderate ability. This happy couple had a son, who, from his infancy, promised to be the comfort and solace of their lives. While a mere child, the

bible was continually in his hands, and so well did he even then comprehend its sacred precepts, that his whole character and conduct appeared to be formed upon them. His parents could not hesitate with respect to his future profession ; he seemed formed for the ministry, and, after giving him the best learning a neighbouring school could afford, they sent him to a proper seminary to finish his education.

It was vacation time, and he was just returned from thence, when his uncle's letter arrived. The offer, in a worldly point of view, was a great one, but neither parents nor son could have a wish to accept of it, when they considered how superiour to worldly wealth was the prospect so excellent a youth looked forward to, in becoming an able and zealous minister of the gospel. " If we should comply with your uncle's request," said the father, " the climate may hurt your health, and living among people who, af-

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ter enslaving their fellow creatures, treat them as beasts of burden, may harden your heart ; and, excellent as your disposition is, in the end ruin your morals. And could all the riches of the Indies make us amends for that ? No; no, my son, the profession which you have chosen is, of all others, most likely to make you a useful, a good, and a happy man ; and if we had millions to bestow upon you, could you be more ?”

A reply, containing a grateful, but absolute refusal, was immediately sent to Jamaica, and this so entirely offended Mr. Mansfield, that, though his brother and nephew repeatedly wrote to him, he neither returned any answer, nor took the least further notice of them, till many years after, when returning to settle in his native country, and hearing that his worthy brother was dead, and his son settled as minister of a large congregation in Lancashire, he resolved to visit him ; and never was a more beautiful

picture of true domestic virtue and felicity displayed, than he beheld in this little family. His nephew had been married several years to the excellent woman who is the chief subject of this work; his mother resided with them, though she lived but a few months after that time, and the sweet little Fanny was a playful, yet well-instructed child of five years old, the delight of every heart.

Mr. Mansfield could not help being pleased with the scene which was presented to his eyes, and was almost tempted to doubt, whether real piety and virtue do not afford enjoyments preferable to those which the most splendid fortune can offer to our acceptance. But before he had time fully to consider this, he was attacked by an alarming illness, in the course of which, he was so tenderly and so skilfully nursed by his nephew's amiable wife, that he believed his recovery more owing to her, than to his physician; and it was probably a recol-

lection of this circumstance, that rendered him now so desirous of her coming to him at Shrewsbury. When he was able to travel, he was advised to go to Bath, and from that time his relations had never seen, and seldom heard from him till the period I am now speaking of; when he was returning from a visit to a friend in Ireland, with an intention of spending the autumn at the Hot Wells, and the winter at Bath.

Mrs. Mansfield was most unwilling to leave home at this time, on account of Thomas, who, she thought, might again want her friendly counsel, to keep him steady in his pious purposes; and poor Sarah, for whom she felt a warm interest, might, she feared, fall back into bad habits, if so soon left to herself. Yet, on the other hand, she was desirous to comply with her uncle's request: he was the nearest relation of her beloved husband, and every one who had been connected with him seemed dear, and almost

sacred, in her eyes: she pitied his forlorn condition too, and, at length, resolved to go and give him all the comfort in her power. As her little family was always conducted with the utmost order and regularity, she found that she could so arrange every thing as to be able to set out the next day, which was particularly desirable, as her uncle had sent one of his principal servants to attend her on the journey, and she was unwilling to detain him longer. Of course she had a good deal to do and think of, but, notwithstanding that, she found time in the evening to send for Sarah, wishing to say a few words to her before her departure.

The poor woman instantly obeyed the summons, but seemed quite cast down: "You are going from home, Madam," said she, with a faltering tongue, "O how greatly shall I miss you, and long for your return!"

Lady. I thank you, my good Sarah, for your affectionate concern. It is not without regret that I leave you, and I hope my stay will not be long. How have you gone on since I last saw you?

Sarah. Quite as well as I could hope to do. My mother came on Sunday as I desired, and took care of the young children while I went to the public worship of God. I put myself and them whole and clean, and, indeed, I wished to do no more, for when we go to pray, it should be with an humble heart. We were placing ourselves upon a bench in the aisle, when a young lady opened her pew-door, and bid me bring my children in. I was sorry to be so troublesome, and would have excused myself, but she would have it so, and putting the little things upon a seat, kindly bade me sit down by them. This goodness brought the tears into my eyes and I thanked God that there were more ladies in the world who were meek and

lowly to the poor, besides you, dear Madam.

I was delighted with the prayers, the sermon, and the chapters which I heard read out of the bible. One of these was a sweet and beautiful prayer which Jesus Christ offered up to God, for himself and his disciples. The minister read this in so affecting a manner, that I am sure I shall never forget it. Our Saviour began with saying, that the time of his death was come, and begging that God would glorify him, because he had then finished the work which he had given him to do : and, after that, he says in such sweet words, that he had taught to his disciples all the heavenly doctrines which God had communicated to him, and that they had hearkened to his words, and *believed* that God *had sent him*. Then he besought his heavenly Father to preserve all his followers from evil, and so to sanctify and fill them with goodness, that as he and the Father

were one, so the disciples also might be one with them; which would convince the world that God had sent him. This our minister afterwards fully explained in his sermon; telling us, that Christ's being one with the Father, meant oneness of mind: that is, being conformed in heart, words, and actions, to the will of God; and he said, that, when by following the divine precepts given by their beloved master, all christians are thus conformed, they will, in the gospel sense, be like the apostles, one with God, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and then all the world will be converted.

O Madam, what I then heard, has hardly ever since been out of my mind; and before I left the pew, I asked the young lady (who I have since found, is our minister's daughter), what chapter it was, and she told me it was the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel.

Lady. I rejoice to find that you have reaped such profit and pleasure

from what you heard. Only go on as you have begun, and you will be a happy and beloved servant to the best of masters. Does the heart of your neighbour yet begin to soften?

Sarah. I have done all in my power to oblige her, by keeping the children from going near her garden, and once, when I saw my eldest boy throwing sticks and stones into a codling-tree that hangs over the hedge, which I own with shame, I have often let him do; I ran to him, and, gathering up the fruit in my apron, took him into the house to tell him, in the best manner I could, that he had been doing a dishonest action, by taking what he knew belonged to another person. The poor child answered, that Mrs. Bennet had a great many apples, while we had none, and it was hard if he might not have those which hung over the hedge; but I told him, that by the same rule, the ragged beggar woman who was then passing by, might take our

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clothes which were drying on the hedge near the road ; for she had hardly enough to cover her, while we had others in our box. " If," said I, " we are to take any the least thing that is not our own, how shall we know where to stop ? and thus nobody's property will be safe, and every poor person will be a thief and a robber ! No, no, my child, let it be a little thing or a great thing, we will take nothing that belongs to another, and then God will prosper what we have, and give a blessing with it."

I then took his hand, and, with the apples in my apron, went straight to Mrs. Bennet. She received us unkindly, and said she was sure I would not have brought them back, if I had not seen her at the window, when I was under the tree picking them up : she was even so cruel as to tell me, that I went into the house to leave a part behind me, and then, with a hypocritical face came to her with the rest.

Lady. This was a hard trial of your patience, but I hope you bore it like a christian.

Sarah. I hope I did, for I was upon my guard, and resolved, let her say what she would, not to return an uncivil word.

Lady. And how did you part?

Sarah. When I offered her the fruit, she told me I might take it back to put into pies with the rest: that the value of it was a trifle to her, but she would be glad to live by honest people. This hurt me very much, but it came into my mind, that as all was brought upon me by my past misconduct, it was my duty to bear it. I thought of my boy too, and resolved to set him a good example of patience and humility: so I laid the apples down upon the table, and saying, I hoped she would never again have reason to suspect me or mine, I courtesied, and left the house.

You cannot think, dear Madam, how happy I felt when I sat down in my own kitchen, and thought over what I had done ; never before had I meekly borne unjust reproaches.

Lady. You had reason, my dear Sarah, to rejoice in this ; and I hope the pleasure you have felt from thus looking back upon your own conduct with approbation, will encourage and incite you to go on steadily in the same truly christian course.

Sarah. I hope and think that a christian temper is gaining ground in my heart, for the very day after this happened, I saw Mrs. Bennet, with her head lapped up in a handkerchief, and guessing that she had the tooth-ache, I ventured to go up to her, and ask if it was so. She answered in her usual proud way, but owned that she had been kept awake the whole night before by the pain of a hollow tooth. A receipt of my dear mistress's came into my

mind, and I inquired whether she had ever tried putting a bit of nutgall into the hollow place. She answered in a haughty manner, that she was not fond of trying those common receipts, and, turning from me, went into the house.

I thought a great deal of her all the day; well knowing how much she suffered, and, hearing the next morning that she was no better, I hurried over my work, and leaving the children with my mother, resolved to go to the druggist's in town, where I used to have it in hopes of being able to give her ease before the following night. I walked as fast as I could, and though it was very hot, got back by five in the evening, and having broken the nutgall into small bits, went straight with it to Mrs. Bennet. I found her sitting at tea, and rather easier; she received me very coldly, and again refused to try what I had taken such pains to get for her; nor did she even ask me to take

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some tea, which I would gladly have done, after my long walk; but to be sure, she did not know that I had taken it on her account. Well, I went away quite disappointed, though I still thought if the pain should return, my labour might not be thrown away; and the following day, hearing that she was worse than ever, and on the point of sending for a doctor to draw her tooth, I went to her again, and telling her that though it might not ease the pain for some hours, it would be sure to cure in the end, she at length let me put it in.

Lady. This is so valuable a receipt that I wish to know exactly how you manage it.

Sarah. At the end of every five or six hours the nutgall should be taken out, and the white stuff which it draws from the tooth wiped away, then it must be put in again. In twelve hours a *fresh* bit should be put in, and wiped as the other, and so you must go on, till the nutgall comes out quite clean, after

which that tooth will never ache again. And for teeth that are in an uncomfortable state, often aching without being badly decayed, a most excellent, and a very pleasant thing is to break a lump of camphor into a vial bottle of water and put a good cork into it; and with this wash your teeth as often as you feel them uneasy, holding it for a time in your mouth. You may every day fill up the bottle with water, and add a little camphor, as you find it wanting.

Lady. I hope to hear that Mrs. Bennet was relieved, and that she has since been grateful.

Sarah. In the course of the following day her husband told me that she was much better, but I would not go in, lest I should seem officious; but yesterday as I was going by her door she stopped me, and saying my receipt had cured her, asked me what it cost, as she wished to pay me for it. I told her the cost was not worth speaking of, and that

I was very glad it had been of service to her. She was going to say something more, but I did not desire to be paid, and therefore went hastily away. She was resolved however not to be obliged to me, for she soon after called my little Sally, and gave her half-a-crown. As I came here to day, I met her, and in the best manner I could, thanked her for this kindness ; but instead of speaking to me as you do, Madam, she drew herself up and said I was very welcome.

Lady. Do not let her pride and stiffness discourage you ; go on doing her all the good in your power, and in particular be careful not to let your children molest her, and depend upon it you will make her a friend at last. Have you any good news to tell me of your husband ?

Sarah. Ah ! Madam, I see no prospect yet. To be sure we have had no quarrels, but that was because I would not quarrel with him. On Sunday

morning I asked him to hear little James say his prayer, that sweet prayer which you taught us, hoping that would have led to some good discourse; but I will not shock you or expose him, by telling you how he answered me. I said no more upon the subject, for it would only have put him into a passion, and directly after dinner he went to the green, and did not come back till late at night. O Madam, his heart is very hard! God only knows whether he will ever be better.

Lady. Do not give up your hopes till you have made a much longer trial; be patient, and look up to God for a blessing in his own good time upon your pious endeavours.

Sarah. Thank you, Madam, thank you for the good advice, and the comfort that you always give me. I hope I am truly grateful to Him for the change which I already see in my children. The three eldest have learned their

prayer, and love to say it; and when I have hushed the infant to sleep, the rest kneel round me while I repeat my own as you advised me, aloud in the midst of them. After I had done so last night, James looked in my face and said, "That Father, whom we have in heaven, is a great deal better I know than our father here, or I am sure I could not love him as you say we ought to do."

O Madam, how I wished you had been there to answer him; I could only press the dear innocent to my bosom and say "God is *all* goodness, and will make you the happiest child in the world. if you will be always good." "Then I will," he replied, "I will be always good, and never vex you any more." I cannot tell you how happy I was; the prospect of my children being good, cheers my heart, and makes me think light of all my troubles.

Lady. It ought, my dear Sarah, to be the first wish of every mother's heart,

and the chief object of her endeavours ; and where it is so, she will seldom fail to be successful.

I shall be absent from home perhaps for several weeks, but I have no other directions to leave with you, than to go on as you have begun, keeping God in all your thoughts, and your duty still before your eyes ; and if for a moment you should forget yourself, and do a wrong thing, or say a rash word ; be not too much cast down, or discouraged by it, but entreat pardon from your merciful Father, and redouble your endeavours not to fall into the same again. In this parcel you will find a few things that will be useful to your children, and may the Almighty keep and bless both you and them till we meet again.

The good widow then put a small bundle into Sarah's hand, and she departed with a heart too full to suffer her to speak, and eyes overflowing with tears of grateful love.

It was now late in the day, and Mrs. Mansfield had still many things to do in preparation for her journey, which put it out of her power to speak to Thomas that night. She resolved therefore to write him a few lines in the morning, which she thought might have full as much influence with him during her absence, as any thing that she could have said before she set out. She accordingly rose early, and having given her servant particular directions respecting the food she was daily to provide for him, and for several other sick and aged persons while she was away, she sat down to her desk, and wrote as follows.

My good Friend,

It is not without concern that I leave home at this time, but the illness of a near relation of my late dear husband obliges me to do so, probably for a few weeks, and I cannot go without sending you my most earnest exhortations to go steadily on in the blessed path into

which you have happily entered. You must not expect that it will be always smooth and easy, no passage through this world either is, or ought to be so: for without trials and afflictions how shall we learn righteousness. Our beloved Master was "made perfect by suffering," and shall we refuse to taste of the cup from which he drank so deeply! The sorrows of a christian are mingled with sweet hopes and consolations; he knows that the eye of a merciful Father watches over him every moment, and that he will lay no more upon him, than his grace enables him to bear. He knows too that life is short, and that an *eternity* of bliss is placed within his reach. Press forward then towards "the prize of your high and holy calling!" "Be not weary of well doing,"—let nothing discourage or check your progress in christian holiness, and doubt not but that in due time you will reap a full harvest of joy and blessedness.

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Farewell, my friend, may "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, give unto you the spirit of wisdom:" may you "put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace; comfort your heart, and stablish you in every good word and work."

ISABELLA MANSFIELD.

Just as this letter was finished, the carriage came to the door, and all her other preparations having been completed the night before, the good Widow stepped into it, and was driven forward towards Shrewsbury.

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART IV.

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Mrs. MANSFIELD arrived at Shrewsbury after an easy journey of two days, and, at one of the principal inns, found the uncle of her late husband in a still worse state than she expected, though the servant who attended her had represented his master as in some danger. He had for some time been confined to his bed, and the excessive lowness of his spirits made him believe himself worse than his physicians would allow him to be. The coming of his niece, however, appeared to afford him some comfort, for having always attributed his recovery from the illness which attacked him in the house of his nephew, to her un-

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wearied care and tenderness, he thought it possible that the same happy consequence might follow from her attention to him on the present occasion.

The melancholy state in which Mr. Mansfield lay, was doubly oppressive to him, as in the days of youth and health he had anxiously avoided every thing which could lead him to a thought of death. Though far advanced in life, he had hoped it was still far distant from him, and now that it seemed to approach, he was filled with terror and dismay. The good Widow could not converse with him as she had done with her beloved husband, when labouring under far severer bodily sufferings, of the gracious purpose for which they were doubtless sent by the Father of mercy, and that, however painful a last illness might be, a good man would be enabled to endure it patiently, and even with thankfulness, by the joyful hope of its removing him from a world of sin and sorrow, and

opening to him the gates of everlasting life.

Such discourse as this, which is soothing and delightful to the mind of the dying Christian, as it assists him to look steadily forward to the unseen state, was painful and distressing to this worldly-minded man. Nothing but a hope of recovery seemed in the least to revive him; capable as his niece was of assisting him to prepare for a change which in the common course of things could not be long delayed, even if it did not immediately take place, he had no wish to benefit by other piety and good sense. He well knew that her ideas of what the Christian character required, stood so much higher than he hitherto had, or in future should be willing to aspire to the practice of, that he feared to hear her speak upon the subject; for though he was at times full of terror with the apprehensions of what would be his condition in that unknown world, upon the

very borders of which he seemed to stand, his faculties were for the most part so benumbed by his disorder, that he had no power even to intend a future change of conduct, if he should be again restored to health ; and all that he at present desired, was as much as possible to drive the subject from his thoughts. He had always believed religion to be a gloomy, melancholy thing ; and those who have been so unhappy as to form this false notion of piety, and have banished it from their days of youth and health, must, like Mr. Mansfield, feel the misery of wanting its firm support in the weakness of declining years, and in the anguish and weariness of a sick-bed.

To find her uncle in this deplorable state of mind, though little more than she feared from her former knowledge of his character, was very painful to the good Widow ; but she plainly saw that it was not then a time to attempt more, than to lessen as far as it was possible,

his bodily sufferings ; and in this she succeeded much beyond her hopes. During the first week, she hardly left him day or night, and he felt such confidence and satisfaction in what she did, and was so ready to comply with all the directions of the doctors, given through her, that a considerable degree of amendment took place, and he was soon after pronounced out of danger. This gave the sincerest pleasure both to uncle and niece ; to the first because he had, for the present, escaped from an event which he dreaded even to think of ; and to the latter, as she hoped the fears and terrors he had so lately felt, would dispose him to such a change of conduct, as would lessen the probability of their return, upon a similar occasion.

As soon as Mr. Mansfield was sufficiently recovered to be removed with safety, she prevailed upon him to go into private lodgings in an airy part of the town, near the quarry, in which delight-

ful walk she often indulged herself with a solitary stroll. She would gladly have been excused from the regular airings in his carriage, which her uncle took twice a day, but as he was desirous of her company, she would not refuse it to him. On one of these occasions, as they drove by the hospital and school, which was endowed by a person of the name of Millington, for the benefit of a certain number of the aged and the young, "What a pleasure is it," said she, "to look upon a building like this, where old age and poverty are consoled and comforted, and the young instructed, and enabled, to earn their bread with honesty and credit."

Mr. Mansfield. I do not like the way of getting to heaven by endowing schools and hospitals when we die. It is cheating our relations, and giving away nothing that we ourselves can use.

Lady. I agree with you, dear Sir, that the truly liberal man is he who

saves from his own present expenses, to relieve the necessities of others. That alone can be called true Christian charity, or real generosity. But if my fortune were large, and my heirs well provided for, the manner of my disposing of it would depend much upon their characters.

Mr. Mansfield. Then I suppose if they were gay, fashionable people, and lived in a handsome style, you would cut them off with a shilling, and leave all that you are worth to the poor.

Lady. I should indeed be most unwilling that my fortune, whether great or small, should go to furnish second courses, superfluous horses and carriages, superb dresses, or any other expenses of the like kind; as it would add nothing to the happiness or respectability of its owner, but as far as it went, serve to spread and increase the fatal infection of that vanity and luxury which already overflow the land. Therefore if my

nearest relations were of that description, I would inquire for some who were worthier, if more distant, and if I had no such kindred, I would look out amongst my acquaintances, for some whose conduct had proved that they merited more of this world's goods, than fortune had bestowed upon them, and I should think myself fully justified in leaving a large part of my property to these; and to all charitable and pious institutions to which I contributed, I should hold it my duty, if I believed my heirs not likely to continue them, to leave such a sum of money, as would prevent their suffering any loss by my death.

Mr. Mansfield. Then if your daughter had married a man of fortune, and lived in splendour, I suppose you would have disinherited her as far as it was in your power.

Lady. If the Almighty had spared my darling child, it would have been far from my wish to have seen her in the

situation that you mention. The disposal of a large property, particularly in early life, is a hard trial of virtue ; yet, young as she was, such were her disposition and principles, that I am persuaded, if left to herself, she would have felt it as a *trust*, a *stewardship*, to be one day strictly accounted for. But had she been married to a man who chose to spend a large income in vanity and selfish gratifications, it might have been otherwise ; my child might have been dazzled by the false glare of worldly grandeur, and flattered for a time into a forgetfulness of her superiour duties : but had it been so, I should not have thought it right to deprive her of the inheritance of her parents ; though I might think myself at liberty to bestow liberal legacies where I thought they would be likely to promote real goodness, and add to virtuous happiness.

Mr. Mansfield. Your ideas and sentiments remind me of your husband's
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father; he used to talk as you do now. But, my dear madam, what great good can it do, for one person, and one who has little power or influence, thus to set up her own opinions and order her conduct, in opposition to all the world. Suppose you go on thus during your whole life, wearing your widow's weeds, and giving up all the pleasures, and nearly all the comforts which your rank requires; who will be the gainers by these great sacrifices on your part? a few poor thankless men and women, who will be idle because you give so much, and abuse you because you give no more.

Lady. The chief good that I hope to do, I own, respects myself. My own is principally the present pleasure, and the future advantage. By following as closely as I can the will of God, as made known to me by his Son and Messenger, Jesus Christ, I secure to myself "that peace of mind, which passeth all understanding," which in my happy

days increased my felicity a hundred fold, and in the heavy afflictions with which I have since been visited, has supported, and I may almost say, made me victorious over every sorrow. For, deprived as I am of a husband who was my guide, my teacher, my support and comforter, and of a darling child, who was the delight and solace of my widowed hours,—I am not unhappy. I have still my Heavenly Father, him, who gave me all those blessings, which for wise and good reasons he has now thought proper to withdraw. I feel that he is always with me, because I endeavour constantly to employ myself in his work. I am content, solitary as my condition may be thought, to remain here as long as he sees fit ; nay, I strive to be thankful for every added day, as it gives me a fresh opportunity of proving my devotion to him. But when the summons comes, which will take me to Him, my Creator, Father, Friend ! to be where

my glorified Master now is, and to join those dear ones whom while on earth he taught me to love,—I trust that I shall meet it joyfully, fully confident in the gracious promise, that “all who die in Christ, will God bring with him.” But to ensure this joy, this triumph even in the presence of the “king of terrors,” I must “be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

Here the widow, much affected, paused for some time ; but her uncle remaining silent, she thus went on.

Lady. With respect to the poor people, upon whom I bestow what time and money I can spare, I am careful to prevent the latter from being an encouragement to idleness. Extreme want and hopeless poverty, I am persuaded, oftener lead to that than even mistaken charity. What I give is chiefly bestowed upon the aged and the sick, and to afford instruction to the young. We cannot be deceived with respect to the

real claims of these, and for their gratitude, I never propose that to myself as an incitement to benevolent actions, though I rejoice where it appears, as a proof of good dispositions in the person who shows it.

To me it is no sacrifice to give up what are called the pleasures of life. In the house of my guardian, with whom you know I lived for some years before my marriage, I had an opportunity of knowing their real value; and I am convinced, that though the amusements and the vanities in which persons of large fortunes often dissipate their time and money, may appear tempting to those who are not sharers in them, they are far from affording real or lasting satisfaction. Often have I witnessed hours of discontent, vexation and disappointment, for the merest trifles. Sick of themselves, and tired of the company which it cost them so much to entertain, they have been miserable from that weakness

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of mind which arose from the worthlessness of their daily pursuits and employments.

Of this wretchedness I have partaken, feeling restless and unhappy, without in reality knowing what I had to complain of, and in this state of apparent prosperity and cheerfulness, but frequent and increasing discontent, every good disposition which nature had bestowed upon me would have been absorbed and lost, had not your nephew rescued me from this worse than Egyptian bondage, a slavery to the foolish fashions of the world, and taught me to live in obedience to the laws of Him "whose service is perfect freedom."

Mr. Mansfield. Few ladies but yourself would have been prevailed upon to quit the pleasures and luxuries of a great house, for the dulness and simple fare of a rural habitation in a country village; and I think even you must in some respects have regretted the change.

Lady. The true affection and regard which I felt for your nephew made his company a constant delight and improvement to me : every hour of it that I enjoyed, raised my heart more and more from the empty and unsatisfying enjoyments of the present scene, towards that better country to which my dear instructor was so soon removed.

Mr. Mansfield. And could your spirits bear to be continually employed on serious subjects? Had you no heavy, melancholy hours?

Lady. Did you find us melancholy? Did you perceive any traces of such hours, during the few weeks that you spent with us.

Mr. Mansfield. I must own that I never did. There was an appearance of satisfaction and happiness in your husband's countenance and manner, as well as your own, that I will confess surprised and puzzled me. His close attention to study, and to visiting his flock, par-

ticularly the sick, faulty, or unfortunate, which I had many opportunities of observing, seemed a slavery to me, accustomed as I had been to a life of business; yet it appeared no fatigue to him. Once I recollect his going in a wet and stormy day, a walk of several miles, to see a person who had just had a considerable loss by the failure of his banker, which affected him so much, that he was taken dangerously ill. My nephew, I remember, gave me a full account of the poor man's situation, saying that he could not possibly carry on the business by which he had maintained and hoped to provide for his family, without the immediate loan of a pretty large sum of money. Your husband, like his father, had a sweet, yet penetrating eye, and he turned it full upon me, saying "I can be answerable for the honesty and industry of this man, and hope I shall be able to get it for him, though I know he can give no other se-

curity for its re-payment." I knew by his look and manner what he meant, and should have offered something towards it, though I am not fond of lending money, but just at that time I had made a large purchase in land, and had only enough left for my current expenses.

Lady. I well remember the time and circumstance that you speak of. My dear husband, that evening, consulted me upon the matter, and we agreed to supply him with a thousand pounds, which prospered so well, that he has since been enabled to enlarge his business, and though he paid regular interest for it from the first, he last year returned the whole sum.

Mr. Mansfield. A thousand pounds was a great deal of money for you to risk out of your small property.

Lady. It was so; but this was a great occasion. The credit, the well doing, nay, perhaps the very life of a worthy man seemed to depend upon it,

and the excellence of his character very much lessened the risk.

Mr. Mansfield. He might have been unfortunate a second time, and I think you had hardly a right to venture so large a part of your child's future fortune, especially as your constant charities would have prevented your laying by any thing to make it up.

Lady. Suppose, dear sir, an opportunity had been offered us, of making a very great advantage of that sum : would you have blamed our imprudence, for running an equal risk ? It would not have caused our ruin if we had lost it.

Mr. Mansfield. I have run some risks myself in the way of trade, though I never went the lengths that others did ; but then I had my fortune to make, and the old saying is "never, venture, never win," Nothing *great* is to be gained without *great* exertions.

Lady. Upon that principle we acted. We were striving for a kingdom !

a heavenly kingdom, a crown of glory that fadeth not away ! And what could be more likely to further us in this great object, to recommend us to *Him* in whose hand the disposal of it is, than doing our utmost to assist a worthy, suffering fellow creature. "In as much as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," says our blessed Master ; and who that has heard these gracious words, can hesitate to perform a kind and generous action, whenever the happy opportunity offers itself.

Mr. Mansfield. I cannot say that I have thought much about these kingdoms in the clouds ; but I have contrived to get a pretty solid property here upon earth, which, though it may not be of the very glorious kind that you speak of, I can see, and reap some present benefit from. As to what will happen hereafter, we know little about it, but I hope I shall fare as well as my neigh-

hours, though you perhaps think otherwise.

Lady. God forbid that I should judge any man. "To his own master he standeth or falleth." But I will own that I am greatly hurt by your expression of "kingdoms in the clouds." If you are so unfortunate as to doubt concerning the revealed will of God, and want faith in the promises which he hath given us by his Son,—I do indeed pity your condition. To live in the world without feeling that we are under the constant care and protection of its Almighty Ruler, whatever may be our rank or possessions in it, must be most forlorn and wretched.

Mr. Mansfield. Why to own the truth, though I have attained considerable wealth, I cannot boast of much happiness: nor have I any notion of the sort of happiness which you seem to enjoy. Tell me in what your religion chiefly consists?

Lady. First and principally in the love of God. To feel and know that there is a Being of absolute power, infinite wisdom, and perfect goodness, who gave us life, and every moment watches over us, who is our tender father, and will "make all things work together for good to those who love him!" To be fully assured of this, should reconcile us to all the evils that can befall us during our short abode upon earth: indeed it cannot fail of doing so by every one who feels this mighty blessing as he ought. Thus faith in the revealed will of God, at once removes from our minds all the misery and trouble which would otherwise spring from the trying and calamitous events of life. The true believer may be "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" looking meekly up to heaven, he resigns his will to the will of his Creator, know-

ing that "the end of righteousness is peace and assurance for ever!"

Mr. Mansfield. Well madam, I do conceive that there may be much comfort and consolation in this : religion does appear to be a real support in the days of calamity and affliction ; but what amends does it make to a prosperous man for depriving him of all the pleasures and indulgences which a plentiful fortune puts within his power ? I mean, what equivalent will it bestow upon him during his abode in this world, for so great a sacrifice ?

Lady. When a true love of God has taken possession of the heart of any man, it is lifted far above what are called the pleasures and enjoyments of life. Vanity and luxury seem contemptible in his eyes. Instead of envying, he will pity those possessors of wealth, who know no better use of it than to indulge selfish gratifications, and a mean desire of appearing superior in rank and riches, to

those who perhaps excel them in every useful and valuable quality.

True religion, by planting the love of God in our hearts, lifts them far above "the pride of life." Nothing but virtue appears lovely and dignified in the eyes of a truly pious man, and he respects that equally, whether he finds it in the palace of the noble, or the cottage of the peasant. And as the pomp and glare of the world do not dazzle, neither can its pleasures seduce him. He knows that time is the most valuable article which he possesses, and sensible that he shall hereafter be called to a strict account for the use which he has made of every day and hour, he dreads to waste any part, in the idle amusements which swallow up so large a share of it among the rich and gay. This conduct you will perhaps call strictness, and gloomy self-denial: but view the real christian, when instead of consuming his hours in visiting those to whom his presence or his

absence is nearly alike indifferent, unless as he adds one to the show of their entertainment, and an additional admirer of its splendour,—view him carrying comfort to the house of mourning, cheering the palid face of poverty; opening the gate of instruction to the young, and soothing the latter days of the aged! See the true follower of Christ thus like a ministering angel brightening every countenance, and gladdening every heart that he approaches, and then tell me whether the good man is not the happy man? See him too in his peaceful dwelling, amidst the small circle of his chosen friends, those who like himself are devoted to the glory of God, and the good of their fellow creatures; see him at his frugal but hospitable board, with such guests, and a grateful and affectionate family surrounding it; see the kindness, the intelligence which beams in every eye, and speaks in every sentence,—and then tell me whether a splendid saloon, a

train of servants, or a variety of rich dishes and costly wines, could add to the enjoyment, or increase the real dignity of such a man?

Mr. Mansfield. You paint from the heart, dear madam, and dip your pencil in glowing colours!

Lady. Ah sir—I draw my picture from a dear original, who at this moment seems to stand before my eyes. It is my beloved husband whom I have thus endeavoured to sketch out; and I had from my own experience, while I shared this blessed life with him, a full proof that religion hath the power of bestowing much happiness in this world: but the largest and dearest part of the present enjoyment of a pious man, consists in looking forward to the glories and felicities of another state, which the clear and steady eye of faith opens to his view.

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Mr. Mansfield. Tell me more plainly what you mean by *faith*, and what you call a *saving faith*.

Lady. The first and grand article of faith, is a belief in the being and perfections of God. Upon this hangs all the rest: and as we may almost say that nature has implanted it in every heart, so it is confirmed and strengthened by every object that she presents to our view. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

That the Maker of the world is *all-powerful* and *good*, is manifest to every rational creature; but to know the particulars of his goodness, and to gain a knowledge of his will, we must examine the precious volume in which he is more fully revealed to mankind. Here we have most convincing evidence of his

gratious interference, to rescue his creatures from the state of idolatry and wickedness, into which they had plunged themselves in the early ages of the world. All the particulars of the Jewish history are so striking, and at the same time so artless and consistent, as to leave no impression on the mind of the reader, but one favourable to their certainty and truth; and the miracles performed by Moses carry with them such clear evidence in the attestation of a cloud of witnesses, amongst whom, while the facts were recent, they were committed to writing, and with the other books of the Old Testament delivered down from father to son for many ages, even to the present day: and in the dispersed and forlorn state in which this people, as a punishment for their obstinate rejection of the Messiah, have been suffered to remain for nearly eighteen hundred years, they still hold them as sacred as their forefathers, who received these "lively

oracles" from eye witnesses of their truth.

It is impossible for us to have clearer evidence of "things not seen," than the Jewish scriptures afford, and upon this foundation our christian faith is built. To Abraham the father of the Jews was a promise given, that from him should descend one "in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed;" and a most remarkable prophecy of Christ was uttered by Moses in these words, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear." Many predictions are to be found in the Old Testament, describing him as one who would be "despised and rejected of men! a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." That he should be "led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so should he not open his mouth." Yet he should be "the Prince of Peace, the Father of

the Age;" the "government should be upon his shoulders," and "the spirit of the Lord God be upon him."

In the New Testament we have a history of the ministry of Jesus Christ, of the doctrines that he taught, and the miracles that he wrought; and a firm belief that he was the prophet thus promised to the world, is the *true christian faith*. Whatever may have been since insisted upon by different churches and sects of christians, all that our Lord himself required, was an acknowledgment that he was the Messiah, *the Christ*, the son of the living God." And to this faith nothing was added by the Apostles, but the great article of God's having sealed the truth of his commission by raising him from the dead. And this is all that is warranted by scripture to be called christian faith: and to make this a *saving faith*, it must be accompanied by a sincere and habitual endeavour after holiness of heart and life.

Mr. Mansfield reflected for some time in silence, and then replied, "Your religion, my dear niece, is consistent and rational; my mind assents to what you say, but I am not prepared to act upon it. I see that you are happier than I, though you want many things that I deem necessary to common ease and comfort. Your happiness too is of a better kind, than that which I have all my life been aiming at: for supposing my large fortune could really bring me all the enjoyments which I once expected from it, still bad health, and the approach of age with its *cureless* infirmities, must come, and deprive me of all, while to you none of these things are evils. An illness is only a trial of your faith and patience, an opportunity of approving both before God; and what I call the miseries of advanced years, will be to you only an assurance that the great and glorious change for which your whole life has been a constant prepara-

tion, cannot be long delayed. O madam, you have indeed "chosen that better part," which I trust you will never suffer to be taken from you.

Lady. Then spoke the uncle of my beloved husband! O sir, let these tears witness with what earnestness I wish, that to a conviction of "the truth as it is in Jesus," you would add that necessary part, a truly christian life. If any thing that I have been able to say should contribute towards it, you know not the delight, the happiness that it would give me.

Mr. Mansfield. Ah madam, there is often a wide gulph between the knowledge of what is right, and the practice of it. I can promise nothing to you or to myself. The world, and the things of the world have for more than sixty years been winding themselves about my heart, and it is no easy task to get released from such a bondage. Habits of luxury and indolence have long had full posses-

sion of me, and to tear myself from their grasp seems little less than dividing soul and body. What you have said has made me wish it had been otherwise, but to do more is perhaps beyond my power: I will neither deceive you nor myself by saying otherwise.

Lady. Will you sometimes allow me to renew the subject? believe me, sir, it will every time be more interesting, and at length become delightful.

Mr. Mansfield. Not much of that at present, my dear niece. If it was only to *talk* about religion, I might perhaps get over my habitual aversion to it, but I am well aware that you would carry me much further. I have not made up my mind to give away half the fortune which I have spent my best days in toiling for; nor is my state of health such at present as to make it prudent thus to agitate my mind even with thinking of it.

The good widow again shed tears, but of a different kind from those which had

fallen from her eyes when she believed that she had succeeded in touching the heart of her uncle, and convincing him of the unprofitable manner in which a large part of his time and fortune were now bestowed. Those were tears of benevolent hope, but these of bitter disappointment. She wondered how a man of understanding, and such Mr. Mansfield really was, could be so blind to his own interest and happiness as to shut his eyes against the full conviction of truths which he knew most deeply concerned his everlasting welfare: and rather than break off from the idle and worthless habits of his former life, hazard the fearful risk of being called, unprepared, before that awful tribunal where a strict account of every man's dealings with God and his fellow creatures will be required. She had several times during his illness proposed reading to him from the sacred volume, but he always excused himself, under the pretence of being too weak to

attend; though he often asked her to take up the newspaper, which was daily laid upon the breakfast table, and on account of the peculiar softness of her voice, expressed a high degree of pleasure in hearing her. She resolved however, for a time, to comply with his request, and forbear to introduce the subject which was nearest to her heart, though fully resolved not to leave him till she had at least made one trial more.

Mr. Mansfield's health was now so much improved that he was able to walk out, and receive the visits of several gentlemen of the town who called upon him, and his niece, feeling that the task was performed which a regard to the memory of her beloved husband had induced her to undertake, greatly wished to return to a home, which, though solitary, was still the object of her warm attachment, on account of the happy and virtuous days and years that she had spent in it, and because she felt that it was there still in

her power to contribute to the comfort and improvement of many. Her uncle was very unwilling to part with her, the sweetness and kindness of her manners, and the good sense and unaffected piety which he had now for several weeks had an opportunity of daily observing in her, had greatly endeared her to him, and he earnestly proposed her spending the autumn with him at Bath, which he thought would be an agreeable change of scene, and an advantage to her health, which was in a delicate state, and appeared to want such a recruit: but she declined these kind invitations, and with much reluctance he at length consented that she should leave him the following week.

On Sunday, the day before that of her intended departure, as she was preparing, according to her constant custom, to attend the public worship of God, she was most agreeably surprised by Mr. Mansfield's offering to accompany her, which though she had more than once proposed

his doing, he had till this time declined. It was the afternoon service, which they could attend without inconvenience, as, to accommodate her, the dinner was never served till it was over. The minister prayed in so solemn and impressive a manner that Mr. Mansfield's mind was in a considerable degree affected. The sermon enforced and illustrated the beautiful parable of the talents; the duty of making a vigorous and animated use of those intrusted to us was powerfully enforced by the example of the "good and faithful servants," who for their zeal and activity in the work appointed to them, were exalted to stations of high honour and felicity in the glorious kingdom of their Lord: while he who had led a life of slothful indulgence, neither improving himself, nor benefiting his fellow creatures by the abilities which God had bestowed upon him, was "cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Mr. Mansfield paid a deep attention to this affecting discourse, and after his return home his niece thought she saw something in his countenance and manner which seemed to say, that it had made a serious impression upon him. Little was said by either during dinner, but when it was removed, and the servants withdrawn; she resolved not to lose this opportunity of endeavouring to awaken him to a sense of his real condition. Her expressive features declared her intentions, before her tongue could utter them, and her uncle, after fixing his eyes for a minute upon her face, thus addressed her :

Mr. Mansfield. I know, my dear niece, you wish to ask me whether I am not affected by the solemn service we have to-day been engaged in; and with a sermon, which seemed as if particularly directed to me; and I will own to you that both have reached my heart. Dur-

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ing the many years that I spent abroad, I never entered a place of public worship, and since my return home, I have been in the habit of making Sunday a travelling day, a day for writing letters, and in short, a day for any purpose rather than the one for which it is designed; and to confess the truth I have hitherto looked upon public worship as a matter of form rather than real usefulness, thinking that if a man was disposed to pray or read, he might do it at least with equal advantage in his parlour or his closet. But my experience of to-day has convinced me of the contrary, and if I was to continue in Shrewsbury, I think I should prove it by my conduct.

Lady. And why only in Shrewsbury? Are there no gospel ministers, no teachers of the doctrines of Christ but in Shrewsbury?—You told me yesterday that you wished for the power of doing something that would add to my happiness, and really oblige me, and

now, dear sir, I will put your sincerity to the proof. Are you disposed to do me a great favour which is completely within your power.

Mr. Mansfield. I am, dear madam. Name your request, and I can almost promise not to refuse it.

Lady. Promise me then, that wherever you are, if your health will permit, you will in future constantly attend public worship on Sundays ; and this not merely in the morning, as if in compliance with the customary forms of the world, but twice in the day ; that if a favourable impression should be made, it may be again repeated, before the first wears off. I know you too well to doubt, that if you give your word, you will fully comply with the spirit of my request : And I shall look upon such a promise as more than a recompence for all the obligations which you kindly tell me I have laid upon you.

Mr. Mansfield. You are surely a most extraordinary woman, and should have been a fellow labourer with those holy men who in old times were commissioned to convert a sinful world. But I am not worthy of your pious endeavours. Think again, dear madam: my indolence is perhaps greater than my avarice, and I would rather supply your benevolence with something considerable for the poor, than undertake thus to fetter myself one day in seven. Come chuse again.

Lady. Excuse me, sir; you are at full liberty to refuse this my earnest request, but I will make no other; and I cannot express the pleasure which your compliance with this would give me.

Mr. Mansfield. Your kindness and your disinterested goodness make you irresistible. You have twice saved my life, and you are now labouring for the salvation of my soul! Well, madam, your request is granted: and in return for this compliance, I have to ask that

you will never enter the house of God without remembering me in your prayers. This will give me some confidence in the efficacy of what you have required from me.

Lady. Then now, and ever, dear sir, you have my most fervent prayers, that you may imbibe a truly Christian spirit, and increase in virtue and in happiness, to the latest period of your earthly pilgrimage,—and when that shall close, may we meet in those celestial regions where holiness and felicity will be ever increasing, and never fear an end!

Mrs. Mansfield, much affected, rose up, and taking the hand of her uncle, tenderly pressed it to her lips. He was greatly moved, and affectionately embracing her, took from his desk a note of considerable value, earnestly entreating her acceptance of it; but this she steadily, though thankfully, refused. "Give it then amongst your poor neighbours,"

said he, "if you are resolved to take nothing for yourself, surely you cannot scruple to do that."

Lady. For that purpose I will gratefully receive whatever you are pleased to give, provided you will come and witness the effects of your liberality, and accept the thanks and blessings of those on whom it is bestowed. Come, my dear uncle, come and distribute your own bounty; come and enliven my solitary habitation by a visit of a few weeks in the course of the next summer, and I will do all that is in my power to make it agreeable to you.

Mr. Mansfield. I accept your invitation, my dear madam; but make no expensive or troublesome preparations for my reception. My servants and horses shall be at the village inn, and I will live in your own plain and simple way. Who knows but I may there acquire a taste for that solid happiness which springs from virtue, and unfetter

my heart from a gross and selfish world. You said the other day, that I ought not to quit a place where I have so manifestly experienced the mercy of God, in a recovery from a dangerous illness, without leaving some mark of gratitude behind, I will therefore give a part of this note between the Infirmary, which I hear is well conducted, and extensively useful, and the school for the instruction of poor children, which I find is a new institution, and may want support.

Lady. A thousand times do I thank you for the pleasure which this generous resolution gives me. Often from my lonely dwelling shall my prayers ascend to the throne of mercy,—to the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith:” being confident that “he who hath

begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Mr. Mansfield. Enough, enough, my dear niece ; I have to-day heard more on this affecting subject than my nerves can bear. My spirits too are low with the prospect of your speedy departure, and between both, I feel that opium will hardly have the power of composing them to night.

Mrs. Mansfield had some difficulty in turning her thoughts from the pious contemplations in which they delighted to indulge, and fixing them on the common affairs of the world : but it now seemed necessary, and during the remainder of the evening she tried her utmost skill to cheer and amuse her uncle in his own way ; and succeeded so well, that his spirits by degrees rose to their usual level, and he in his turn entertained her with some instances which had been related to him of the liberal dealings of her husband's father, who, though he never

was rich, had found means materially to befriend many, and some times by lending small sums of money to industrious young men, and at the same time assisting them with his advice and recommendations, had laid the foundation of respectable and worthy families, and of fortunes much larger than his own. Mr. Mansfield had before hinted at some of these circumstances, as instances of folly and imprudence in his brother, but he this evening spoke in terms of commendation, which gave heartfelt pleasure to his niece, as it clearly manifested a favourable change in his own sentiments.

As the Widow wished to set out early the following morning, she took a tender leave of her uncle, when they parted for the night. He pressed her to make use of his carriage, but she would only be prevailed upon to accept of the attendance of his principal servant, who, by his master's orders, defrayed all her expenses on the road, and carefully attend-

ed upon her till she reached her beloved home, from whence she had been absent nearly two months.

She was joyfully welcomed by her faithful servant, and her first inquiries were respecting the welfare of her poor neighbours, of whom she on the whole received a favourable account. She felt satisfied and thankful to find herself again in peace and safety, under her own roof, and many tender thoughts of those who were wont, in her happier days, to greet her return to it, after the shortest absences, with joy, filled her mind for the remainder of the evening. When she retired at night, after having paid a grateful tribute of praise and adoration to the great Protector and Preserver, for this additional instance of his goodness to herself, she offered up a fervent prayer for him who had been of late the chief object of her care and solicitude. "O heavenly Father," said she, "convert his mind and loosen it from the things of the

world, and fix it on Thyself! While there is yet time, while the short day of life continues may he turn to thee, with all the powers which thou hast bestowed upon him. Seeing the folly and vanity of his present pursuits, and feeling the dignity of his nature, and the high destination for which he was formed, may he by studying the holy precepts which thou hast given us by thy beloved Son, and diligently striving to obey them, be enabled to 'work out his salvation;' being henceforward 'filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ our Lord, to the glory and praise of Thee, the One God, and Father of all."

Devout and heavenly contemplations continued to fill her mind, till she fell into a sweet and refreshing sleep, such as the oppressors of the earth, the conquerors, or the plunderers of mankind, or even those lesser culprits, the avaricious, the selfish, the arrogant, and the

dissolute, must sigh in vain to experience. During its short intervals, every thought breathed gratitude to God, and love to her fellow-creatures: and when an airy vision was pictured to her imagination, her husband and her darling child seemed leading her through the courts of glory, into the more immediate presence of the Omnipotent Father of spirits!

Ah reader! wouldest thou see these beatific visions? wouldest thou thus visit in imagination the regions of the blest? Lead then a life like that of her whose character and conduct I am now describing, purifying thyself from all the corruptions that are in the world, and “perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.”

The virtue and goodness which Mrs. Mansfield possessed, are, in their different stations, within the reach of all. Every one may like her serve God in sincerity of heart; be a Christian indeed, “in whom there is no guile.” All who can read may study the Scriptures as

she did, which will not only enable them to order their own conduct according to their holy precepts, but to give much useful advice and information to others; and for worldly possessions, her share was far from large, but she spared from herself, and gave up all the luxuries and vanities of life, that she might be able more liberally to relieve the wants of her brethren; and this practice would furnish to most of us, the means of bestowing more in charity than we are perhaps aware of. Vanity and the love of pleasure have brought many to want, but I have never known any one impoverished by the most liberal exercise of benevolence. Money so expended leaves a blessing with what remains, and every ones own observation will convince him if he looks around, that "There is who scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is who withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." But should our circumstances be such as barely to

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afford to ourselves the necessaries of life, true Christian love in our hearts will still enable us to give much assistance and consolation to the sick, the aged, the ignorant and the unhappy. To set an example of pious and cheerful submission under poverty, or afflictions of any kind, is to benefit all who are within its reach, and there can be no situation, in which a truly good man will not make himself useful and respectable to those who are connected with him.

The worthy Widow had just breakfasted on the morning after her return home, when she was told that Thomas's wife desired to speak with her, and bidding the servant to send her in, was agreeably surprised at the complete change which had taken place in her appearance. Instead of a gloomy air of misery and discontent, she saw a cheerful and happy countenance : and instead of slatternly and dirty clothing, her dress was singularly neat, and perfectly clean.

"I am glad to see you, my good Jane," said she, "sit down and tell me how your husband has performed his promises during my absence."

Jane. O madam, I did so long to tell you how good he is, and how happy I and the children are, that the minute I heard the joyful news of your coming home, I put on my things and set out. But I fear I have been too bold in coming so soon.

Lady. Not at all ; I am quite as desirous of hearing all that you have to say, as you can be to tell me.

Jane. Thank you, thank you, madam, for all your goodness ; I and mine are bound to bless and pray for you, as long as we live. The letter that you wrote to Thomas, was brought to him the very day that you went, and I never saw any thing like him when he read it ; his countenance changed again and again, and the tears ran down his cheeks. I asked him what you could have put into

it, to affect him in that manner, and he told me, when he had considered it a little, he would read it to me, which he accordingly did, and I could almost have cried myself, for I never heard any thing so moving. Well, madam, this letter, or his Testament, was hardly out of his hand all the week, and on Sunday he would have us all go with him twice to public prayers, and walked with us, and read for us, and was so good tempered, that I said to myself, "If there was no such place as a public house, I do think all would be well." On Monday morning he would go to work, though he was still so weak as to be able only to earn half wages, which is little more than the allowance from his club came to, and I wanted him to rest another week : but he said he would spare the club to the utmost of his power, and that though he could not do much, he knew a little work would do him good, and prepare him for the harvest, which was almost ready to cut.

The week after he went to work in earnest, and I was amazed to see him come home every night quite sober, though it was otherwise with many of our neighbours ; and on Saturday he brought me home such a sum of money as he had not done for many a day. I asked him how he had got so much, and he told me that he had agreed for an advance of wages during the harvest, in consequence of his requiring but half the usual quantity of liquor, by which means he should not only get more money, but preserve his health and his senses, and recover the good opinion of his master. I could hardly believe my own eyes and ears, and taking the money I said, "O Thomas, I should be but too happy if this would last." "Pray then to God," said he, "that I may have strength to pursue what is right."

And he has pursued it sure enough, from that day to this : bringing home every penny that he gets, and being so

kind to me and the children, that the world seems quite a different place from what it did two months ago.

Lady. I am delighted with this good account, and I hope, dear Jane, you endeavour in every thing to oblige, and make your husband happy; and that you do your utmost to instruct your children to do the same.

Jane. I hope both I and they are better than we used to be. Thomas reads a fine prayer to us every night, and says he will beg of you to put down a short one for the children to learn. We never quarrel now, and he is so good and gentle, that I must be a wicked wretch indeed if he did not mend me. What a wonderful thing religion is! to change a tiger, as I may almost say he once was, into a perfect lamb.

Lady. True religion is indeed powerful. "The word of the Lord hath the pre-eminence, and bringeth mighty things to pass." Strive then with all your

might, to fix it firmly in the hearts of your children, for no other guide can conduct them safely through a dangerous and evil world.

Jane. Thomas is always trying to do that, and God seems already to prosper him, for they are far more mild and teachable than they used to be. It certainly is exactly as you said, dear madam, they take example by what they see. But you have not yet heard the very chief thing that I had to tell you. My eldest daughter poor Patty, whom I had not seen for four years, was in a good service at Chester, where she caught a fever, and though her mistress was so good as to have a doctor, and nurse her till she was cured, yet she gained no strength, and could not do the work of her place. I had just heard this sad news, and was weeping over it, when Thomas came from work. He asked me very kindly what was the matter, but I was afraid to tell him, because he never used to love

this poor girl: but he would know what I was crying about, and when I had told him, "Make yourself easy," said he, "I will write to Patty, and ask her to come here for a few weeks. Our fresh country air, with the blessing of God, will soon bring her about, and she is heartily welcome to all that this house affords."

O madam, I was so full of joy that I could not answer him, and cried more than ever; but when I could speak, I thought I never could thank him enough: and from that hour determined never to cross him again, cost me what it would. Well he wrote that very night, and yesterday week my dear child came, and would you believe it, Thomas received her just as if she had been his own daughter, and has behaved like a father to her ever since, and the poor thing has grown so fond of him, and recovers her strength so fast, that it makes me more happy than I can tell you.

Lady. And I, dear Jane, fully partake in your happiness, and wish that all persons in your station could see the blessed change, which Thomas's conversion has brought about in his family. From a scene of discontent and misery, of poverty and wretchedness, it is become the abode of peace and comfort. Even in these hard times the profits of a poor man's labour, if he has constant work, will support his family; and if his wife does her utmost to assist him, and is as frugal in spending as he is industrious in getting, they may even lay by a little against sickness and old age.

Jane. I have often thought madam, when Thomas was putting by the money for his club, that if he spent nothing in public houses, he might spare twice as much, and we live better besides: and by the same rule now that he brings home all he gets, we shall surely have something to spare. I am better in heart too than I used to be, and will strive more to help

him, and if we can lay by but sixpence in a week, it will come to a sum in time. But we must first finish paying our debts, for while he was ill we got a good deal behind hand, and Thomas will never be easy till every one has his due ; and then the children are to be sent to school, and the first money we can spare after that, is to go for a Bible.

Lady. I am so much pleased with all your plans, that I will furnish you with a Bible. So, as soon as your debts are paid, begin to save, and for every pound that you bring me, I will give you a shilling a year interest. You shall have a written security from me for the money, and whenever you want the whole, or any part, come and ask me for it. My beloved husband always did this by his servants and poor neighbours, and I am desirous as far as my ability will permit, to carry on all his benevolent works.

Jane. O madam, how can I ever thank you enough for all this goodness.

I shall talk of you every day as Thomas does : and we and our little ones will never say a prayer, without calling down blessings from him, who only can reward you. My husband will so rejoice to hear of your return ; and who is there indeed that will not, for every person in the village has at one time or other felt your kindness.

Lady Let your praises, let your thanks be offered up to God, the Father and benefactor of all mankind. I have no other pleasure, no other business upon earth, than to press forward in the course which my beloved master has marked out, and to persuade all within my reach to do the same, by convincing them that the ways of righteousness are pleasant, and that all "her paths are peace."

Go then to your family, remembering that He who ruleth the heavens, is also present in your lowly habitation, is "about your path, and about your bed,

and spieth out all your ways!" Keep this benevolent Father, this All-seeing Judge continually in your thoughts, and diligently strive to render your way acceptable in his sight. "And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, "I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."

The poor woman with eyes full of tears, went silently away, leaving the heart of the benevolent widow filled with gratitude to the great giver of *All*, for the happy prospect of increasing piety and comfort, which manifested itself in this little family.

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART V.

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VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART V.

Mrs. MANSFIELD was surprised, that the second day after her return from the long visit which she had paid to her uncle in Shrewsbury should pass without Sarah's having called to see her; but being much engaged in settling her household concerns, and receiving the visits of her neighbours, she could not send for her till the following evening, when she kindly desired her to come at the usual hour of drinking coffee. At the time appointed the poor woman came, full of joy and gratitude: "O madam!" said she, "how thankful am I to see you once again at home! Had I not feared to be too bold, I should not have waited

to be sent for. You stayed so long away, that I began to be full of fears that you would not come back."

Lady. I thank you, my good Sarah, for your kind solicitude, and am glad to find myself again under my own roof. How has the time of my absence passed with you? I shall rejoice to hear that you have been getting forward both in goodness and in comfort.

Sarah. On the whole, dear madam, I trust that both I and my condition have been mending. My chief endeavour has been to keep God and my duty always in my thoughts, and by one contrivance or other, I have been able to go with my three eldest children to prayers every Sunday but one, since you left us; so that I have heard more of the Bible, and many fine sermons, which I strive to remember and turn to profit; and, according to your good advice, I in the evening repeat to my young ones all that I can recollect of what I have heard; and

though they do not fully understand all that I say, yet the poor things love to hear me, and it impresses it upon my own mind.

I wish I had any thing good to say of my husband, but he goes on much in the old way. During the harvest he was so ill for several days as to be unable to work: but I nursed him in the best manner I could, and did not reproach him, only saying it would be well if he would save himself from more pains and losses of the same kind, by being sober. He made me no answer, knowing that what I said was true; and I was careful not to say too much, lest it should make him angry; for there is no good done, but a great deal of harm, by putting any one into a passion; and I think he has, upon the whole, behaved rather better since that time, both to me and to the children.

Lady. The smallest sign of amendment should encourage you to go on still

in the same good way. Try to prevail upon him to go with you to the house of prayer, he may there hear something that will reach his heart: but if he is obstinately set against this, as I think you once told me he was, do not make yourself unhappy about what you cannot alter. Continue patiently to bear with his faults, and set him the best example in your power. By doing this you will act a truly christian part, and whether you succeed or fail, your own reward will be secure.

Sarah. O madam! I am already far happier than I was before you put me into this blessed way. Whenever any thing used to vex me, I cried and fretted as if my heart would break, having no one to complain to, no one to console me; but now I look humbly up to God for comfort, and never fail to find it. Most that I have to suffer is from poverty, and the unkindness of my husband: and surely I ought to' be patient under

these, when I remember that my Saviour had "not where to lay his head," and was forsaken and persecuted by those, to bring about whose salvation he both lived and died ! I know that I ought to rejoice in every opportunity of imitating my Master, and I hope I do rejoice, even when my eyes are full of tears.

Lady. I love you, dear Sarah, for this pious frame of mind, and I entreat you above all things to endeavour to infuse it into your children.

Sarah. It shall be my daily care. By your bounty the two eldest go constantly to school ; and when I have the delight of hearing one of them read, not a day shall pass without my gaining something from the word of God, and I shall then soon know more of his holy will, and be better able to instruct my children.

Lady. How have you gone on with your neighbour, Mrs. Bennet ?

Sarah. Very peaceably. She is as proud as she used to be ; but, as I am careful in keeping my children from giving her the least offence, I have heard no complaints, and we speak civilly when we meet. She has lately been troubled with a pain and giddiness in her head, and I have many times offered to help her with her work, which is now more than she is well able to do ; and she often lets me bake for her with the yeast which I make myself, and says, the bread is the best she ever tasted.

Lady. And how do you make this yeast ? My servant has sometimes much trouble in procuring what is good ; and, if it really answers, I shall thank you for the receipt.

Sarah. It answers so well, that my good mistress, of whom you have heard me say so much, seldom used any other ; and the trouble is no more than this :

Boil a potatoe till it breaks in pieces, and while the water is warm pour it nearly all off. To the potatoe, in this very moist state, add a dessert spoonful of coarse sugar, and a tea spoonful of common yeast. Beat the compound up with a wooden spoon, and the yeast is made. Common yeast is only wanting the first time, what sticks to the wooden spoon will afterwards supply its place.

This receipt has been of the greatest use to me ever since I kept house; but till lately I was so selfish as never to have mentioned it to any one. But about a month ago our minister preached a sermon on those fine words of Jesus Christ, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets." In this discourse he clearly made out, that it is the duty of a Christian to do all that is in his power to make every one within his reach both

good and happy ; and that to do this from love and thankfulness to God, and in obedience to his holy will, is all that the law and the prophets were designed to teach. Before I heard this, I thought we had little or nothing to do in the way of duty, but with our own families and friends ; and that all the rest of the world had a right to expect from us was to be let peaceably alone. But I now find, that if I know any thing likely to be useful to another person, it is not a matter of choice to me whether I will or will not acquaint him with it, but, as a Christian, I am bound in conscience to do so ; and since I have been convinced of this, I have, to the utmost of my power, communicated the little knowledge that I possess.

Lady. You cannot give a clearer proof of your being a true follower of Christ than by uniformly acting thus. What the world calls ill-nature is in reality a vice of a malignant kind, though many

great pretenders to religion are guilty of it. If we love our fellow creatures, we shall delight to do them good, and contribute to their happiness by every means within our power. There was a time, dear Sarah, when you took pleasure in Mrs. Bennet's uneasiness, and many indulge themselves in such unchristian feelings; but if we smile at the pain or mortification of another, it is too plain that, had it been in our power, we would have caused that pain or mortification, unless we had been deterred by selfish motives. Let us then watch carefully over our own minds, and, if we perceive that pleasure arises within us at hearing of the losses or uneasiness of any one, take ourselves severely to task, and pray earnestly to get the better of the evil disposition from whence such feelings spring. "He that loveth his brother," (and every one of the human race is included in the term *brother*,) "He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light,

and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." If we feel a *real active* good will towards *all* our brethren of mankind, there will be no fear of our offending their heavenly Father by our neglect or unkindness towards them; for our own hearts will powerfully prompt us to embrace every opportunity of assisting and befriending them. But if we behold any one without having this desire to do him good, our feelings are not those which belong to a real disciple of Christ. "Whoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

Too many even of those the world call worthy, need much to be reminded, that this love, in which we are required to abound towards all, is an active principle of benevolence, and not the mere absence of hatred or ill-will, which is all that some think necessary in their feelings towards mankind in general, and should not only be manifested by our

humility, gentleness, and charity, towards the poor, but by an endeavour to please, oblige, and benefit all, of whatever rank, who come within our reach.

Sarah. How exactly, dear madam, does your practice agree with your precepts! It was but the other day that I heard Mrs. Green of the shop talking of you, on this very subject. She said that before she came to settle here, she was so proud that she hardly ever spoke to a poor person but in the way of business; for she had always seen every one striving to keep company with those above them; and even fine ladies, who were very good and humble to the poor, would scarce speak to the highest farmer's wives, or even the lower sort of gentry. But when you called to see her, and asked her to drink tea, and behaved so kindly, she saw what a beautiful thing *real* humility was: and your conversation with her, she said, on that and many other subjects, and your fine

example, had taught her to look upon no one as beneath her, but to love and do good to every body. And indeed all her neighbours say how kind she is; but I did not know, till then, that you, dear madam, had taught her.

Lady. As children of the same glorious parent, and heirs of the same heavenly inheritance, the trifling distinctions of rank or riches ought not to be the means of dividing us from each other. With the vicious of whatever station, we should, as far as it is possible, refuse to have any intercourse or connexion, unless we have a rational prospect of reforming them: but every true disciple will discard from his mind the sin and folly which we call pride, by attending to the words of his beloved teacher, "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

At this moment one of Sarah's children came to tell her that she was immediately wanting at home. The good

widow kissed the little rosy messenger, and putting a large piece of plain cake into his hand, bade him give it to his mother to put by till Sunday, when, after evening prayers, it should be divided among the family. A low bow, and a dimpled cheek, expressed the pleasure which this little present had conferred, and Sarah thankfully promised to dispose of it according to her directions.

As soon as Mrs. Mansfield supposed that her uncle was arrived at Bath, she wrote to him, for at parting he had expressed an earnest desire to hear often from her; and before she thought this letter could have reached him, an answer was put into her hand, which she opened with some anxiety, and read as follows :

“ My dear Niece,

“ You will wonder at hearing from me so soon, as I told you to expect but an indifferent correspondent : but a matter has just occurred which gives me very

great uneasiness ; and I have of late been used to unburden my heart to you, and have found so much comfort and consolation in so doing, that I cannot help applying to you upon the present occasion. While we were together at Shrewsbury, I often talked to you of my cousin and intended heir, William Mansfield, and told you that in the early part of his life, soon after your husband had refused an offer of the same kind, I had sent for him to Jamaica, where he continued with me many years, and when I finally quitted that island I left him in a situation where with proper care and attention he could not, in a course of years, fail to make a fortune equal to my own. I also told you that he was married, not entirely indeed to my satisfaction, for, in point of interest, I know he might have done better, but to a sensible and worthy woman, who has brought him no less than six children, the two eldest of whom being boys, he some

time ago sent at a large expense over to England to be educated by a friend at Bristol. I thought him too hasty in doing this; but the old saying is, "Get gold and use it." I had no doubt but he was getting money by handfuls, and only told him that he must be in no hurry to do the same by the rest. Soon after that time he began to complain that the climate had injured the health of his wife; and one of his children dying of a fever, his discontent seemed rapidly to increase, and he plainly said that he would gladly give up three-fourths of his profits, if he could enjoy the rest in a country where he should not be in continual fears for the lives of his family. I did not much relish this declaration, and in return reminded him, that it had been his own fault to encumber himself with a wife before he was in circumstances to maintain her how and where he pleased. But as I really loved him, and knew his strong attachment to her,

I advised him to send her and the children home by the next fleet, meaning the one which is just now come in, and then make up his mind, by lessening his expenses as much as possible, and attending closely to business for ten or twelve years, to enable himself to follow them with a tolerable fortune. I promised, too, to notice and assist his family to the utmost of my power.

“Most, or all of these particulars, I believe I mentioned to you, and I remember you wished that my cousin and her daughters would settle near you, that you might assist her in their education; and I hoped to have brought something of that kind about. But yesterday morning, as I returned from the pump-room, a letter from William was put into my hand, and can you imagine what it told me? Never, if you were to guess for a hundred years!—Nothing less than that he had sold his plantation, and stock of sugars, coffee, &c., freed all the negroes,

(having before prepared them to make a proper use of liberty,) together with their children ! and, finally, that he and his family had *left Jamaica !*

“ Did you ever hear of folly equal to all this ? You know that I do not defend the slave-trade ; it is a cruel, brutal business, not fit for Christians, or even men, to carry on ; and I am glad that England is fairly rid of it ; for, if a man uses his negroes well, he may keep up his stock, and even considerably increase it, as I found, to my great profit, under the care of this very man ; for I never new any one so successful in his treatment of them. But for one who was in lawful possession of such valuable property to fling it away, was acting like a child, or an idiot. I would as soon turn my coach-horses loose upon the downs, and lock the stable doors, as I would give liberty to those stupid blacks, and they would have as much reason to thank me for it. The indignation which I have felt, and do feel, at this

part of my cousin's conduct, almost chokes me ; my hand shakes so violently that you will hardly be able to read what I write ; and I am the more agitated, because I am not sure that you will not defend what he has done, on the score of what you call justice and humanity ! But I think a man's first consideration ought to be his own family, which would prevent his throwing away thousands for a mere bubble.

“ Not a wink of sleep could I get last night for thinking of his folly and madness. To give up a concern of such great and certain profit, and come with a large and perhaps increasing family to a country involved in war, loaded with taxes, and where a trader hardly gets up in a morning without a risk of bankruptcy staring him full in the face before night ; and all because his wife was sickly, and he had lost a child by a fever ! He fairly owns that, knowing I would not have agreed to all this, he chose to

do it without rather than against my consent; and the first that I hear of it is, that he and his family are here at Bristol, within ten miles of me. It is well that he did not come nearer—but I would not have seen him. He tells me, (and though I have not yet mentioned it, this is the worst part,) he tells me that he could not, forsooth, have left Jamaica with a quiet conscience if he had dealt otherwise with his slaves; for though while upon the spot he could look narrowly into the treatment they received, he could not secure humane usage to them under new masters; and he felt that he had no right so to risk the lives and well being of his fellow men.—Could he have thrown out a more severe reflection upon me? He must intend it as such, and to countenance him after it would be to own its truth and justice. I well remember when he first came over to the West Indies, he talked much about the cruelty and unlawfulness of

enslaving the Africans ; and while I continued with him, he was foolishly particular in attending to their complaints : but they all became so fond of him, that though he begged an additional holiday for them of half a day in a week, the work went on faster than ever it had done before : so I let him have his own way in managing them, without which I believe he would not have staid with me.

“ I hoped, however, that as he grew older he would have thought less of other people, and more of himself, particularly when he had a family to provide for. But his self-willed folly has now overleaped all bounds, and he shall pay the forfeit, for not a shilling of mine has he to expect, now or hereafter. He talks of a partnership with his wife’s brother, who is a merchant in Bristol, and of bringing up his children in habits of industry and economy. These are fine plans, or rather fine words ; for I have no doubt but he depends upon me, if not

for present support, yet to quit the world in a few years, and leave him all that it cost me my health, and the labour of half my life, to acquire ! But he will find himself mistaken : as he has run counter to all that he knew I should approve, I have done with him, and with his family. Though he is my nearest relation, and the only one remaining of our name, I have renounced him. When I have a little relieved my mind by sending this letter to you, I will write one to him, which will soon be finished, for I have only to say that from the moment he receives it, all connexion between us is at an end ; and that if he attempts to see me, or even to write, he will drive me instantly from Bath, though the waters are at present necessary to my health, which is terribly shaken by the pain which his most ungrateful conduct gives me.

“ And now, my dear niece, I feel a little easier ; for I have unburdened my

heart to one who I know will feel for my misery, though she may not altogether approve of the resolution I have taken. Do not, however, attempt to alter it, for it would be vain. I will not bestow the gains of a life of care and thriftiness upon one who, to indulge a weak fondness for his family, and perhaps still more, a love of ease which at his time of life is inexcusable, has thrown fortune from his arms; and, to complete the whole, by his romantic folly, has impoverished his family, and justly forfeited all claim upon my favour, by casting, as far as it was in his power, a cruel reproach upon my character, for not having acted in the same insane manner.

“Therefore, my beloved niece, let me entreat you not to say a word on his behalf, but promise me that you will come, and more than supply his place in my heart. Come, and be the friend, companion, and nurse, of your husband’s uncle. I will not say that you shall

also be his heir, because I know that you are disinterested even to a fault, and would reject my fortune, were I to offer it wholly to your disposal: but come and share with me in all the comforts and advantages which it can bestow, and my gratitude and tenderness shall show the sense I have of the obligations that I owe you. My house, my carriage, my servants, shall be all at your command, and my place of residence whenever you please, so it be far from Bristol. Come, then, to prolong and sweeten the remaining days of your ever affectionate friend and uncle, **THOMAS MANSFIELD."**

The good widow read this letter with equal astonishment and concern. She wondered that Mr. Mansfield should see the conduct of his cousin in so false a light, and cast him from his heart and arms for actions which, to her, made him an object of the warmest love and admiration. The moderation of his wishes

with respect to wealth, his affection for his family, and, more than all, his humane and generous consideration for the unfortunate men who had been forced or stolen from their native land, and sold, like beasts of the field, to labour under the whip of their cruel owners, endeared him to her affections, and she could not for a moment hesitate how to act. Going, therefore, to her desk, she sat down and wrote the following answer :

“ My dear Uncle,

“ You did me but justice in believing that I should most sincerely and tenderly grieve for the heavy disappointment which you have lately suffered. It is hard to give up a prospect which the heart has long dwelt upon with pleasure; and I do feel for the pain and anguish which you have endured, and lament the distressing effects of it upon your health. Most cordially do I thank you for all the kind expressions contained in your too interesting letter. Be assured that every

sorrow which you communicate to me, is lodged in the bosom of a sympathizing friend, who would rejoice to send you a comfort in return;—and who can tell whether a good providence may not give me the delight of consoling your troubled mind?

“O that I could induce you to see your cousin’s conduct in the same light that I do! But, considering the different pursuits and habits of our lives, this could hardly be expected. I am, however, persuaded that before this reaches you, your heart will be softened towards him, and towards his children, who are your natural heirs; who cannot have offended you, and who I trust will carry your name down to posterity with added honour and credit. How often, dear sir, while I was with you in Shrewsbury, did we differ in opinion even on material subjects! yet it did not in the least interrupt the friendly regard which I trust will ever subsist between us. And why may

it not be so with you and your worthy cousin ? The intention and desire of both is to pursue what will lead to future good and happiness ; but you disagree as to the probable means. You, with a large part of the world, think that a great fortune ought to be the grand object of a man's ambition ; and that all but honour and honesty should be given up to forward its attainment. Your cousin, with myself, and many others, would be ready at all times to sacrifice wealth on the altar of virtue or affection. In the slaves, whom he might have sold for a large sum of money, he beheld a number of *fellow-creatures*, each of them as a child of God, and an heir of immortality ; of equal value, in the eye of reason and religion, with the proudest of their masters. These men, some of whom were, doubtless gifted with talents and dispositions which might have made them shining examples of goodness upon earth, and future bright inhabitants of heaven, were

by the wickedness and cruelty of their fellow men, forcibly reduced to a condition little different from that of the brute animals; and it remained with him either to leave them to finish their lives in this miserable and degraded state, subject also to the chance of brutal treatment under new masters; or, by generously relinquishing a right derived from iniquitous and unchristian laws, to raise them again to the station which the Great Creator intended for all his rational offspring,—that of *free*, and therefore *accountable* beings. O sir, I envy your noble cousin the pure delight which must arise from the performance of such an action.

“I well remember that you told me when at Shrewsbury, that by means of a school which he had established for their education, a great part of the negroes on his plantation had been well instructed; and that the schoolmaster (a worthy and pious man) was in the constant habit of reading daily prayers to

them, and preaching on Sundays,—your cousin and his family regularly attending. This was indeed preparing them for making a right use of the freedom which he no doubt always intended restoring to them. The glorious work is now nearly accomplished, and it will be a delight to him to reflect upon it every succeeding day that he remains on earth; and when, in the fulness of time, ‘the Lord shall gather his saints from the four winds, and his redeemed from the ends of the earth,’ will not these men be his ‘hope, his joy, his crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?’ And when he rises to that heaven for which such deeds will fit him, may we not suppose that these his ‘children in the Lord’ will meet and know him there? And what will be the feelings of their hearts when, in a pure and glorified state, they behold him who was the humble instrument of freeing them from the slavish bonds of superstition, and dis-

persing the dark shades of ignorance which clouded their minds, by bringing them to Christ, the anointed of God, the revealer of his holy will; and enabling them to enlist themselves under the same blessed master with himself; turning them 'from dumb idols, to serve the living God!' changing the most unnatural and unchristian relation in which they before stood, of *master* and *slave*, into that of equal followers of one Lord, 'brethren in Christ!' 'For there is neither Jew nor Greek,' neither African nor Englishman, 'neither *bond* nor *free*; for we are all one in Jesus Christ.'

"O my dear uncle! forgive me that, 'from the abundance of my heart' I have thus spoken. Your excellent cousin could not mean to reproach you in what he did: believe me, sir, the real Christian is not hasty in condemning the conduct of his brethren; he looks narrowly to his own actions, but is tender and backward in judging those of another. All I ask is,

that you would remove from his heart the heavy weight of your displeasure, give him your affectionate countenance, and leave him (for the present at least) to pursue his plans of business and œconomy. It is not your fortune, but your renewed regard, that I solicit for him: the rest you will perhaps tell me would follow of course; but I feel certain that it is a far inferior object with him.

“Were I to accept your kind and liberal invitation, and were your partial affection for me to carry you so far as to cause you to cut off your natural and most worthy heirs, and endow me with all that you possess, believe me, sir, I would not use a shilling of it, but should hold myself bound by every tie of honour and justice to give it entire to them. I trust, however, that no hand but yours will make your cousin rich. At a distant period of time, after a delightful intercourse of love, fed by paternal bounty on one side, and tender filial gratitude on the other,

may the boon be bestowed on the most deserving of men, by him to whom he already owes so much !

“ As the Bath waters seem likely to be beneficial to you, I hope you will spend the winter there ; and when the fields and groves have again put on their summer livery, I shall look with impatience for your promised visit here ; accompanied perhaps by some of the dear family at Bristol. I may then try to trace a resemblance in face and manner, as there clearly is in mind, between your cousin and my best beloved. He has daughters too,—may not one of them be left with me to educate ? and may she not become another Fanny ?

“ O sir ! my tears flow fast ; the subject becomes more touching, more affecting than I can bear.

“ My mind is weaker than I thought it was, for I have been obliged to lay down my pen for several hours ; and now that I resume it, the same tender feelings

return, and nearly overpower me. If there is a healing balm on this side the grave for such wounds as I have received, it is you only who can apply it, and I have told how it must be composed.

“This is, I fear, a letter of sentiment and feeling more than of argument. I might have said much perhaps that would have better forwarded your cousin’s cause: but I am no skilful pleader; an artless petition warm from the heart is all I have to offer. Throw not such a jewel from you as you are now possessed of in this man’s heart, but continue to bind him by the powerful bonds of gratitude; and that you may rejoice for many years in the comfort and support which it will afford to your declining age, shall be the ardent prayer of your dutiful and affectionate niece, **ISABELLA MANSFIELD.**

The good widow was not at all satisfied with what she had written; she thought she might have said more and better in a cause which so deeply interested her

heart : but she feared to add any thing, lest it should diminish the force of what she had already said ; and, thinking something might depend upon its reaching her uncle soon, she resolved, such as it was, to send it off without delay.

While Mrs. Mansfield's mind was anxiously employed upon the subject of the letter, she was informed that Thomas, who had called several times before when she had been unable to see him, requested the favour of being admitted. She bade the servant show him into the parlour, and begging he would sit down, addressed him in the following manner :

Lady. I was most happy, my good friend, to hear from your wife that you have so fully performed all that I hoped for and expected from you ; and rejoice to perceive by your improved looks that your health is quite re-established.

Thomas. I have always to thank you, dear madam, for fresh proofs of goodness. God has been pleased to restore my health, and I have good hopes that he will enable me to make a proper use of it.

Lady. You have now had some experience of a Christian life, and tried the strength of your own resolutions of amendment.

Thomas. Many times have I been strongly tempted to fall back, and many hard trials have I had to get the better of myself: but when I earnestly called upon God for help, I always found it; and by his gracious assistance, I have sometimes so mastered my passions and temper, that no one has perceived the struggle besides myself. When I am sensible of having committed a fault in thought, word, or deed, I bring to mind your excellent advice, and call myself back to the right road. Instead of being disheartened and discouraged, I redouble

my diligence ; and have now some hopes that the happy time you told me of is approaching, when thinking and acting right will become a habit, and I shall seldom feel an inclination to do otherwise.

Lady. Praise God, my friend, praise him for this blessed change ; pray that he will renew your strength from day to day, and lead you on to higher and higher degrees of perfection : always aiming at "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," who hath "left us an example that we might follow in his steps."

Thomas. That, dear madam, is what I continually strive to do. I keep him always before my eyes, and by considering what he would have done in my place, I can at all times find out what I ought to do. And since I have done this, I find that the world goes more smoothly with me : I see my family in general content and good tempered ; we have money for all

that we really want, and have nearly paid our debts. When that is done, if the Lord continues to prosper me, I see that I shall be able to save something, which I will most thankfully put into your hands. I have also formed a scheme for being useful to some of my neighbours in the course of the winter which is coming on. The widow James has two sons, who are sober and industrious youths; but getting good wages, and having no one to control them, they are in danger of being drawn in to go to public houses, and get idle and vicious habits: so I have proposed to them, that as the evenings will soon shut in early, they should come to my house after work, to read and write for an hour or two. My kitchen is always clean and comfortable; and as they are to bring candles, we can afford to make a good fire when the weather becomes cold. You, dear madam, have added to your other goodness the present of a Bible with so fine a print, that I think I

shall be able to read in it if I live to four-score; and by my advice each of the boys has purchased one of the same value; and after next week our meetings are to begin. I am but a poor scribe; but as neither of them knows any thing of writing, I will do my best to teach them.

Lady. I very highly approve of your plan, and shall perhaps be able to give you some assistance with respect to writing and accounts, both of which it is most desirable that every young man should learn. What you are going to do, my friend, may be of material benefit to your pupils, in implanting good principles in their minds, and forming habits which may go with them through life; and if there are any other young men in the village who wish to join you, I hope you will not refuse to admit them.

Thomas. I have already thought of several to whom it might be useful, but I will begin with these; and when we are

got into the way of it, I can take in others by degrees. One rule I am resolved to make, which is, that no one who comes to our little meeting shall ever enter a public house.

Lady. And I will add another, if you will give me leave,—let no one be absent from a place of public worship on Sundays, without giving some good reason for it.

Thomas. I thank you, madam, for this hint, and will make it a condition of being admitted amongst us. How do I praise God for having put into my mind such a means of doing good, as I hope this will be! Never can I sufficiently bless him for the change which through your persuasions he has wrought in my heart, which I feel to be greater and greater every day. A prospect of being useful to my fellow-creatures, is now more delightful to me than any view of worldly gain or advantage to myself. Indeed I make less and less account of any benefit

that does not stretch forward to the happy land which lies beyond the grave. O madam! you have filled my mind with hopes which raise me above all cares of the present time, but such as, I trust, will help me on towards that heavenly country.

Lady. My heart rejoices to hear you utter words so worthy of a Christian; to know that they spring from an honest and sincere mind, and are accompanied by a daily succession of good deeds. Who would have thought, three months ago, when you were living with few or no thoughts of God and another world, and in so many miserable and sinful habits; with no bright hopes to cheer you in sickness or misfortune, and few kind actions even towards your own family to look back upon;—who would then have thought of the happy change that has now taken place in your mind and conduct; which enables you not only to give com-

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fort and frugal plenty to your own household, but to stretch out your hands to those around you, and guide them into the heavenly way ! How plain a proof are you to yourself and others, that a man may do much good, without being either rich or learned ! Nothing but rational and active piety is wanting to make the poorest man a faithful servant of Christ, and a humble helper with him, in working out the salvation of mankind. Go on then, my excellent friend, "continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel." "Walk worthy of God, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

The good widow was so much moved that tears of pleasure filled her eyes : and Thomas, with a heart overflowing with gratitude to her, and piety to God, soon after took his leave.

In the course of a few days another letter from Bath arrived, which Mrs. Mansfield opened with trembling hands, and read as follows:

“ Dear Madam,

“ I was far from expecting such a letter as I have received. If you had been hired to plead at the bar for my cousin, you could not more decidedly have taken his part. You say that we used to differ while at Shrewsbury: but we never spoke on any point which affected me so nearly, nor did you ever go to such extremes in your opposition to me. It is well that you did not come here according to my request; for I could not have endured to hear one who has acted so foolish, so thriftless, and so ungrateful a part, praised and exalted into something more than man. You cannot, I know, think William Mansfield such an angel of light; without disliking and despising me; so I must give up all thought of the visit to you next summer, to which I looked for-

ward with so much pleasure. I know that you are a good woman, and I shall never forget the obligations which you would not permit me to return ; nor will I forfeit the promise I made at parting, with respect to my employment of the seventh day. But our feelings are so opposite upon a point in which I can never change, that I think we have met for the last time. I inclose a note for thirty pounds, to be divided as you please among your poor neighbours ; they shall be no losers by the alteration in our plans. I shall soon leave Bath ; and when I am settled in another residence, you shall again hear from,

“Dear madam,

“Your obliged friend,

“THOMAS MANSFIELD.”

This letter was more harsh and positive than the widow's worst fears had led her to expect, and it shocked her very much. She blamed herself for having written with such warmth, and wished

she had suppressed her feelings, and said only a part of what she thought. This might have been more prudent; but it was so contrary to the simple and ingenuous sincerity to which she was continually prompted by her open heart, and which had indeed been a habit of her life, that she could not convince herself of the entire rectitude of so doing. Yet she was distressed to think that, in her generous eagerness to do good, she might have added to the irritation of her uncle's mind, and increased the evil she was so anxious to remove. It was, however, useless to grieve for what could not be recalled; and committing the cause of the excellent William Mansfield to the care of Him who could best appreciate his conduct, her mind became more easy, and she began to consider how she might best dispose of her uncle's bounty; resolving to put down exactly the manner in which it was employed, and send the account in the first letter that she had an

opportunity of writing to him ; for she looked upon herself as forbidden to do so till she heard from him again.

The first deserving object who occurred to her was a boy of a mild and amiable character, who had been lame from his infancy, was the son of an honest labourer who had many other children, and had been kept at school by her for the last two years. He was now of an age to be apprenticed, and she had spoken of him to a respectable shoemaker in the village, who had offered to take him for ten pounds, and a small sum in addition to fit him out. Another of her neighbours, who had brought up a large family without asking for assistance from the parish, was just recovering from a dangerous illness ; and she knew the doctor's bill was a heavy one, and must keep him a long time in poverty before he would be able to discharge it. He had owned this to her, and also that he had nearly gone to the last shilling of all that

he had laid by before this sickness came. Things would not perhaps have gone so badly with him had the worthy widow been at home : the simple medicines which she would have ordered in the beginning of his complaint, might have checked its violence, and the nourishing food with which he would have been supplied, have given him more strength to contend with it : and as her absence was occasioned by her attendance upon Mr. Mansfield, she thought this case had a peculiar claim upon his liberality ; and accordingly, after paying the bill, she gave him enough to discharge the half year's rent of his cottage and garden, which was nearly due. The remainder of the money she resolved to lay out in small presents during the ensuing winter among various old and sickly persons, who had little, except a parish allowance, to subsist upon. To several of these she allowed a shilling a week, which in common times had enabled them to live in tolerable

comfort : but she foresaw that the approaching season would be trying to the poor, on account of the high price of provisions ; and was glad to add something to what she usually put by for sugar, coffee, oatmeal, and other similar things, which she often sent in small quantities to the helpless and the old.

The delight which dispensing benefits among her fellow creatures always gave her, caused a warm glow of affection in her breast towards him, who had at this time enlarged her power of doing so. “ My dear uncle,” said she, “ why are you not here to receive my thanks, and those of the worthy hearts whom you have cheered ? To the poor lame boy you have, with the blessing of God, given a provision for life ; nay, many a little fortune has, with the help of honest industry, been raised from no higher a beginning : and to the recovering man you have restored that ease of mind which is so necessary to health, and to enable

him again to resume those virtuous labours by which his family is supported. And besides these great matters, I have enough left to gladden the heart of age and poverty many many times in the course of the dreary months which lie before them. All this, my uncle, you have done, for little more than one splendid entertainment would have cost you, by which, so far from any being really benefited, scarce one perhaps would have been made happy, even during the few short hours it lasted."

A few weeks after this time, David Williams coming to work in Mrs. Mansfield's garden, she resolved to take the opportunity of having a little conversation with him; and after giving some direction about his work, she thus addressed him :

Lady. I think, David, you are particularly happy in having so fine a family of children, and so sensible and good a woman for your wife.

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David. The children are sharp enough, and all pretty healthy, considering the hardness of the times; and as for Sarah, I make no complaints of her.

Lady. You say too little, in merely saying that. I love your wife for her piety and gentleness, and I respect her for being a good mother, a good wife, and a good manager of her family.

David. Why, as to all that, madam, you are a better judge than I; but, as I said before, I make no complaints of *her*, whatever she does of me.

Lady. You best know whether you give her occasion for any. If you are a kind husband, and carry your wages home to be spent in your family, sharing all that you have with them, as an affectionate parent delights to do, I am sure she will rejoice to praise you.

David. I want none of her praises: a man is not to ask his wife how he is to spend his wages, I suppose; and if she has desired you to talk to me, and take

me to task, I can tell her she will get very little by it. I am not such a child as to want schooling at this time of day.

Lady. I assure you she never desired any thing of the kind, or had the least knowledge that I intended it. But you cannot surely be offended with me for wishing you to be better and happier than you are. I have given advice to many, which, though they did not like it at the time, they have afterwards thanked me for; and should rejoice to be of service both to you and to your wife, if you would give me leave.

David. I don't know what Sarah has been telling you, madam, but I believe we live together as well as most other working-people do. To be sure, I spend a little money at the Green; but how can I help it? I am not so young by eighteen good years as she is, and cannot take to drinking water at my time of life.

Lady. I do not even wish that you should; but the regular quantity of liquor which is supplied by those who employ you, ought to be all you take.

David. I cannot do without a little more: if my wife starves me, I wonder who is to maintain her and the children.

Lady. Let me again assure you, that this is a friendly debate between you and me; your wife neither does nor will know any thing of the matter.

David. Well, madam, I have told you the truth; I cannot do without something more than is to be had at home; and I had better go on as I do, than die and leave my family for the parish to provide for.

Lady. You have a very false notion of what will do you good, and prolong your life. A comfortable supper at your own house, such as your wife could afford to provide if you carried all your wages home, would strengthen you more than all that the cellar of a public house

contains. The strongest constitutions are destroyed by regularly drinking a good deal, even without ever drinking to excess: but if you go the length of brutal intoxication, I need not tell you that you are inviting loathsome diseases, and an early death; committing a great sin in the sight of God, and making yourself a hateful, senseless wretch in the eyes of your fellow creatures.

David. I never did say, and I do not pretend to say, that drunkenness is a good thing; but I know by myself, that wholesome sound liquor gives strength, indeed there is no working without it.

Lady. I have lately heard a circumstance which makes me believe just the contrary. A number of men in one of the king's dock-yards laid a wager on a matter that had been disputed among them, Whether, having as much food, and of whatever kind he pleased, a man drinking water would not hold out to work longer than one who with the same food

drank porter. The trial was made, not by two men, but by six or eight men on each side : their work was sawing timber, and the quantity they undertook to do each day, very great. They both chose beef-steaks, as the most nourishing food ; and after a contest of many days, the porter-drinkers gave up, while they who drank nothing but water were still fresh and able to go on.

David. And is this matter really true ?

Lady. I was told it by a person upon whom I can depend : and I hope it will convince you, that drinking even what are called wholesome liquors, rather lessens than adds to the strength of a man who has plenty to eat ; and upon a weak and empty stomach its effects must be much worse.

David. I wonder very much that it should be as you say. But even if it is, I cannot afford to live upon beef-steaks. Indeed we seldom get a bit of fresh meat in our house ; and our pig was a poor lit-

the thing this year, because the potatoes were so scarce and dear.

Lady. Think then how hardly your wife and little ones must have fared, and how cruel it is in you, to spend upon what in reality does you much harm, that money which would bring plenty and comfort to you all! Come, promise me that you will think seriously of what I have said, and to-morrow we will talk of it again.

David. I can think of it, to be sure. Indeed, I cannot help thinking of the men and their wager: that those who drank nothing but water, should out-work the others, was a thing one never could have expected. If I was to tell this at the Green, Robin would get into a passion, and hardly a soul would believe it.

Lady. I wish I could persuade you never to go to the Green again, but to take delight in your own family and your own comfortable fire-side.

David. Lord, madam, nobody would know me, and I should hardly know myself, if I left off going to the Green. Man and boy, I believe I may say, that barring sickness, I have hardly been a week away from it in the last forty years. I have seen three generations of landlords, and I think I shall outlive the fourth: for though poor Robin is but young, he is falling fast into a dropsy. He takes too much of his mother's good ale; though I know it is not that, so much as the rum and gin, that kills him.

Mrs. Mansfield was so much shocked and disgusted with the unfeeling hardness and insensibility of David Williams, that she was tempted to leave him without saying another word. But compassion for poor Sarah, whose condition she now more than ever pitied, and fears for his own wretched prospect, as a human being going blindly on in the "broad way which leadeth to destruction," made her resolve to add something more.

Lady. Will you allow me to say a few words to you upon the most weighty of all subjects? Have you well considered whether the life you now lead is such as you can justify to your own heart, such as will promote your everlasting welfare? Are you making a wise preparation for the solemn day of account, towards which every mortal man is rapidly advancing, for that call to another world, which may surprise you among your companions at the Green, and even in a state of brutal intoxication? Have you well considered this? and can you run so fearful a risk?

David. I cannot say that I have thought much about it. There is no occasion for thinking of what one cannot prevent. Every body must die once; but I am not so old, or sickly, as to be looking for it just yet.

Lady. Ah David! I have had many warnings to look for early death. My beloved husband, as you well know, was

taken from me when little more than half your age, and my darling child when still much younger. But I do not repine: my heart rejoices in the certainty that they were ready for the call. Prepared like well ripened corn for the sickle, they were cut down, and are now stored up for the great day of recompense which is promised by our Almighty Father, when "he shall send Jesus Christ, who hath already been preached unto us, whom the heavens must receive till the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

David. I do not pretend to understand these high things.

Lady. That, my friend, is your own fault. All that is necessary to salvation, God has mercifully placed within the reach of every one. The Gospel of Christ was preached more especially to the poor, and all our material duties are so plainly pointed out, that "he who runs may read."

David. I have heard many sermons in my time, and many people talk about religion; but for the most part I think it is too learned for a poor working man, who was never taught to read.

Lady. Do you think you should be a better man, that is, *more obedient to the laws of God*, if you understood them better?

David. Why, I hardly know whether I should or not; for I see rich men, who must know all about it, quite as bad as we poor ones can be. I never swore so many oaths in a week, as I heard farmer Jopes do but yesterday; and I know a certain person who uses false weights, and grinds down horse-beans and many other things to mix with the flour in his mill, charging all at the price of the very best wheat. Yet these men have Bibles in their houses, and go to church or chapel on Sundays, pretending to be religious people!

Lady. I am sorry to own that what you say is too true : some even of those who must be fully acquainted with their duty, fail miserably in the performance of it : there are many, I fear, who kneel down in places of worship, without lifting up their hearts to God, and have Bibles in their houses without reading their precious contents. But let us at present leave these unhappy men to settle this great concern for themselves, and look narrowly into our own account. Do you, as far as your knowledge reaches, act a christian part ?

David. Why really, madam, I hardly know what you call a christian part. I believe I am nobody's enemy but my own : I do no one any harm, and what more can be expected from one like me ?

Lady. I will tell you, my friend, what is expected and required from you, what you are fully able to perform, and what if you do your utmost to perform, your life in this world will be full of hope and

comfort, and after death you will be received into a state of joy and blessedness, which will never end. Is not this worth striving for? Is it not a glorious prize?

David. To be sure it will be a fine thing for those that can deserve it.

Lady. None of us, not even the best, can *deserve* it. But God is so *infinitely good* and *kind*, that he offers it freely to all those who serve him in love and sincerity of heart; to all “who diligently seek him;” to all who “live soberly, righteously, and godly,” during their short time of trial in this world: and can you have the heart to refuse so noble, so bountiful an offer?

David. Why, I should not wish to refuse it, to be sure, but—

Lady. Come, promise me that from this time you will begin a new life.—Try it but for one week: do not go to the Green for one week, but take all the money that you get, home to your wife. All that I now ask of you is to promise me this.

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David. Why, to be sure, to oblige you, madam, I should not greatly value such a thing as a week : but, as I told you before, my landlord is poorly, and I know, as many customers have fallen off in these hard times, will take it ill if I forsake him just now. Besides, I owe him a little money, which, if he thinks I am gone to the Bear, perhaps he will trouble me about : so you see at present I cannot just do what I wish : and besides that, when people are getting in years, it cannot be expected that they should alter their ways.

Lady. Unhappy man ! will you not be persuaded to flee from the wretched fate of those who reject the offered bounty of their God ? Do you not tremble while I repeat the words of an apostle, "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be upon every soul of man who doeth evil?"

David. I should tremble, madam, if I was a robber, or a murderer ; but, as

I said before, I hurt nobody but myself, and the best of us are not without faults.

Lady. True, the best of us have faults. Only one, who was *therefore* the *best beloved* of God, has lived in this world entirely free from sin; doing *always* what was pleasing in his sight. But every real Christian steadily *aims* at doing so: and according to our success, according to the measure of real goodness that we attain, will be our reward in the eternal state: and so, with respect to the ungodly, the different degrees of guilt will each receive its due punishment from the great Searcher of hearts. You have happily escaped the enormous guilt of murder, and the shameful crime of robbery: but are we not expressly told, that no drunkard shall enter into the kingdom of heaven? and are there not threatenings that point fearfully to him who wastes the substance that should feed his wife and little ones? Think of the solemn words of Paul, he to whom the word of life was

communicated by Christ himself in his glorified state, after he had ascended into heaven: "If any provide not for his own," says this great apostle, "and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is *worse than an infidel.*"

Does not this clearly tell you that by such actions you renounce your Lord, and forfeit all title to the name and the hopes of a Christian?

David. Perhaps it might have been well if I had heard all this long ago, but now I beg you to say no more about it. I do no more than many others, and, as I said before, at my time of life it is hard to change.

Lady. Well, David, for the present I will say no more, than begging you to remember, that whether we prepare for it or not, a day of solemn reckoning will come, when you and I must be judged according to our works. I entreat you then to think seriously of all that I have

said, knowing that I can have no other view or wish but to bring you to a just sense of your present most dangerous and sinful state ; that while life is yet lent, you may by true repentance of the past, and turning from your evil ways, “flee from the wrath to come ;” and, for the remainder of your days, “walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his heavenly kingdom.”

The worthy widow stood silent for a minute ; but David returning no answer, she retired into the house, disappointed and grieved at the apparent ill success of her attempt to soften the hard heart and enlighten the darkened understanding of this man. She lamented that any human being should be so lost to every good and generous feeling, so destitute of gratitude to God, or love to man, as he appeared to be ; and deeply regretted that the pious and gentle Sarah should be united to such an one.

There are few things more to be deplored than that young women should rashly marry men with whose principles and characters they are little acquainted, and even that little which they do know, perhaps not to their advantage ; unaware of the degree of danger and misery which they are too probably bringing upon themselves. The most fearful part of the risk is, that they may by degrees become reconciled to, and corrupted by, the vices of their husbands. This is complete *ruin*, in the worst sense of the word ; ruin *here* and *hereafter*. But if fortunately this should not be the case, —should the wife, like Sarah Williams, afterwards improve in piety and goodness, and be, as is too likely, unable to reform her husband, what a severe affliction must it be to her to have for a constant companion a low-minded, hard-hearted, profligate, or dishonest man !—to see the father of her children not only setting them an example which it would

pierce her soul to see them follow, but doing his utmost to prevent and destroy the influence of her good precepts upon their tender hearts !

Greatly did the benevolent Mrs. Mansfield lament that the early imprudence of Sarah should have brought so hard a trial upon her : but a bad marriage is an evil which, with respect to this world, has no cure ; and she kindly resolved to lose no opportunity of assisting her so to strengthen her mind, that she might patiently endure what could not be remedied. “ Trust in God, and full confidence in his gracious promises,” said she, “ will support her ;” and it shall be my part frequently to bring to her mind the short duration of the present life, and the never-ending happiness of the next ; and that “ our light afflictions, which are but for a moment,” will work for the patient continuer in well-doing “ a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory !”

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART VI.

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PART VI.

MRS MANSFIELD's time passed smoothly on for several weeks, in its usual active yet peaceful course, of friendship and kindness towards her neighbours, and heartfelt piety to God. The former was the business, and the latter the delight, the refreshment, and the support of her life. She often found satisfaction and enjoyment in a social and humane intercourse with her fellow creatures, and more especially when it appeared that she had done them good: but she was sometimes hurt and disappointed by being unable to turn the sinner from the evil of his ways, the vain from his vanity, the proud from his arrogance, and

the worldly-minded from his short-sighted selfishness. But in her hours of meditation and prayer, all was sweet and consoling to her mind. In every sorrow and disappointment, she found a certain relief in opening her heart to God ! in laying down her cares at the footstool of his throne, and meekly yielding up her will to his. If a tear of regret for those dear ones from whom she was for a time separated, would sometimes rise in her eye, or roll down her cheek, she would soon check the soft emotion, by recollecting that she was an heir of *immortality* ! And all sorrow for present privations, was swallowed up by the glorious prospect which *endless ages of felicity* presented to her view. Not in her own righteousness did she trust, for she was "meek and lowly of heart," and deeply sensible that towards God, after the utmost that we can do, still we must remain, "unprofitable servants," the best of us not doing all that it is our duty to

do : but her firm confidence was in that mercy which hath promised salvation to the upright in heart ; to those “ who are risen with Christ, and seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God !”

Hour after hour would glide on, while with the sacred volume open before her, she would dwell on its contents with unalloyed delight, her heart overflowing with gratitude to Him who by the trials which he was pleased to allot for her in this short life, afforded the means of fitting her for his everlasting kingdom : and when she closed the book, and returned to occupy herself with the common affairs of the world, it was always with renewed strength, and resolutions of making all that happens on its changeful scene, subservient to that glorious purpose.

It has before been mentioned, that this excellent woman kept up a friendly intercourse with all her neighbours of what-

ever rank ; believing that as “brethren in Christ,” she was bound, as far as her power extended, to be useful to them all. To the poor she was gentle and compassionate, enlightening their minds, as well as relieving their necessities, and to the classes above these, who are in general totally neglected, and sometimes scarcely treated as fellow creatures, by the rich and well informed ; she was uniformly attentive, inviting them occasionally to her house, and conversing freely with them on all subjects on which she thought she could be useful to them in removing their prejudices, and putting things of consequence to the regulation of their heart and conduct, in a just light before their eyes. She did not do this (as the reader may observe in her dialogue with Mrs. Bennet) in a haughty dictatorial manner, as if she sent for them to be taught and schooled ; but she drew forth their opinions, and where she thought them wrong, mildly endeavoured

to set them right. This practice of associating in turns with all ranks to promote their improvement in piety and virtue, it may well be supposed she copied from her beloved husband, who was a true shepherd of the flock which was committed to his care. During his life she was his zealous helper in promoting christian faith and morals among them, and when he was gone, she felt herself still called upon to leave nothing undone in her little circle, which God had given her talents and opportunity to perform.

One morning, on her return from a number of visits, in every one of which she had administered relief, comfort, or useful counsel, she was met at her own door by Sarah, and delighted to perceive an unusual degree of cheerfulness in her countenance, desired her to come in; and when they were seated, "Something I am sure has happened that pleases you, my dear Sarah," said she, "and I shall be glad to share in your satisfaction of whatever kind it may be."

Sarah. O madam, I have indeed good news to tell you. But it is quite a little history, and if you can spare time to hear me, I will begin from the first.

Lady. Begin then, for I shall rejoice to hear of whatever gives you comfort.

Sarah. I believe I told you, madam, some time ago, that Mrs. Bennet was in poor health, which gave me an opportunity of often being useful to her, so that we were quite upon civil terms, though she was too proud to ask me to sit down and talk with her as you, though a lady, so often do. But what I came on purpose to tell you is, that last Sunday night, after we had said our prayers, and I had put my children in bed, as I was sitting alone by the kitchen fire, thinking of the sermon and chapters which I had heard in the day, I was surprised to hear a horse come upon a full trot up to my neighbour's house, and stop there without the door being opened, or the sound of any person dis-

mounting. I went out, and the moon shining bright, saw a little hackney which I knew was commonly rode by the servants at the squire's, standing with a side saddle on his back before Mrs. Bennet's door. I called to know if any body was there, but no one answered. I then went to the door, which was locked, and looking in at the kitchen window saw that it was empty, and the fire made up close. I knew that Mr. Bennet had gone out in the morning to visit a brother at some distance, and was not expected back for a day or two; and after considering a little, I thought it was very likely that Mrs. Bennet who often visits the housekeeper at the hall, might have borrowed this little horse to carry her home, and from his coming to her door without a rider, I feared something bad had happened. The thoughts of this made me tremble from head to foot, and I stood some minutes considering what was best to be done. What would I

then have given that my husband had been at home, and sober, that we might have gone together towards the squire's. But I could not think of going almost a mile to the Green in search of him, as in the meantime the poor woman might be lost. So, coward as I am, I resolved to go by myself in search of her; and running up stairs for my bonnet, just looked at the children, who were all fast asleep, and offered up a prayer to God, that he would guard and protect both them and me; for I was so alarmed that the danger then appeared much greater than it really was.

Just as I was setting out, I recollected the bottle of hartshorn which you, dear madam, gave me for my Sally's sore throat, and put it into my pocket. The rain which had fallen in the morning had made the road very wet and slippery, and as I walked along, trembling, and almost faint, the moon was covered with a dark cloud, and a heavy

shower wetted me to the skin. I now wished that I had mounted the poney, as it was full three miles to the squire's, and I was resolved to go the whole way, if I did not find her on the road : but this did not come into my mind till I was a good way from home, and I could not think of turning back. So on I went, looking fearfully about, and dreading the condition in which I might find the object of my search ; till just as we turn from our long lane into the great road, the moon happening to shine upon the very spot, I saw a woman lying on the ground without sense or motion.

O madam, I flew to her, and you may conceive my joy when I found that she was alive, though at that time quite insensible. My recollection and spirits seemed to return to me in a moment, and sitting down by her, I raised her head to my bosom, and rubbed hartshorn on her nostrils and temples. While I was doing this she had several convulsive struggles, and her

breath at length returned, but it was some time before she was able to speak, though she many times attempted it. As soon as I thought she could understand me, I told her how I had been alarmed, and in consequence came out to look for her: she feebly thanked me, and asked how we should possibly get home. I dreaded to see her attempt to rise, lest I should find that some bone was broken or out of joint; but thank God, it was not so, and she was able after a while to stand, and then supported by me to move slowly forward, complaining heavily of a bruise on her left arm and side. Many times were we obliged to stop and rest upon the wet ground, for though I am so much stronger and taller than she, I found myself quite unable to carry her, which I more than once attempted to do.

At length however we reached home, when to add to our difficulties the key of Mrs. Bennet's house was missing; so I could only take her into mine, and re-

solve to do all that was in my small power to help her, and putting her into David's arm chair, I stirred up the fire, and put on plenty of water to heat. I then fetched down linen to air, and the most comfortable clothes I had, for the poor woman was almost covered with mud, and quite wet through. When the water was ready, I helped her to wash her face, hands, and feet, which seemed greatly to refresh her, and then she put on dry clothes: after this was done, I grieved to think that I had nothing in the house nice enough for her to eat, but she was so kind as to say that she liked a fresh egg as well as any thing, and I lost no time in getting one for her. She now began again to complain of the pain in her arm and side, and I rejoiced to know that I had succotrine aloes in the house, which I pounded, and mixing with warm water, rubbed it gently for a long time over every part that was affected. By the time this was done the linen was aired,

and calling up my little Sally who was sleeping with the infant, I laid it on my own bed, and putting Mrs. Begnet into it, had soon after the pleasure of hearing her say, that she lay quite at ease, and comfortable. I then sent Sally to the other children, and after feeding the young one and laying it in the cradle, got some dry clothes and supper for myself, and prepared for spending the night in the arm-chair, having desired Mrs. Bennet to knock if she was unwell, or wanted any thing.

O madam, with what delight, and gratitude to God, did I look back upon the business of the evening. He had given me an opportunity of serving him in the manner that he chiefly requires, by being a comfort to, and perhaps saving the life of a fellow creature. He had protected my sleeping innocents in their lonely cottage, and me, while with a trembling heart I wandered forth alone, in a dismal night, and after directing me to the object of

my search, had given me the power of supplying all her immediate wants. I could not sleep for thinking of all these things, but I spent a happy night, in prayer and thankfulness, and could not for once forbear rejoicing that David did not come home, for in the state that he no doubt was in, it would have been most distressing to me, particularly as no bed was left for him.

Before it was quite light in the morning, Mrs. Bennet called me to her, and after saying that she had slept well, and was in all respects much better than she expected to be, desired I would go to the place where she had fallen from her horse to look for the key of her house, which she thought must have been dropped there: so as soon as I had dressed the children I set out, and found it exactly on the spot where she had lain. I ran back with it, and Mrs. Bennet begged me, as soon as I had milked her poor cows, which I grieved to think had been forgotten the

night before, to go and light a fire in her kitchen, and bring her some clothes which she directed me where to find. When all this was done, she got up, and to my great joy, found herself surprisingly well. When she came down stairs, "Sarah," said she, "I will not leave your house till you tell me what I am in your debt for all the care and trouble I have given you. Do not be afraid of naming a good round sum, for I owe you a great deal." "You owe me nothing, dear Mrs. Bennet," said I, "I bless God, for giving me the power to help you, and you are freely welcome to all that I can do, both now, and at any other time when you may want me." She said nothing in reply to this, but after being silent for several minutes, asked me to rub her side and arm once more with the aloe and water. When this was done, "I begin to want my breakfast," said she, "lend me your arm, for I hardly know whether I can yet walk home without it;"

and indeed she was quite giddy after going a few steps, and was very glad to be seated by the side of her own fire. I had before put on the tea kettle, and left every thing clean and comfortable, but as she was so very weak, I stayed to get her breakfast ready ; and will own to you, dear madam, that I thought she would have asked me to sit down and partake with her, which would have been a little treat, as she always has the best of every thing ; but she did not, and I thought to myself, it is her way, and why should I look for any other. So I told her I would go and do my work, and come to her at milking time in the evening. " I shall want you before," said she, " do come as soon as you have an hour to spare after dinner." I promised that I would, and left her.

Just as I had got my house into a little order, my husband came home, in a very bad humour, as he always does after spending such nights. I will however

say nothing of his behaviour, as it would shock you, without relieving me, but hasten to tell you, that after we had dined, and he was gone out, I hushed my infant to sleep, and leaving the rest of my children at play before the door, went in as I had promised to Mrs. Bennet.

"Sit down, Sarah," said she, "I want to have some conversation with you." I did as she desired, and she thus went on. "It is not any thing which I can say, that will let you know the sense I have of your goodness towards me, but my future conduct shall show it. From this time I have done with the foolish and sinful pride which made me look down upon one who is a thousand times better and worthier than myself. At the time when I recovered my senses, and found you seated on the wet ground supporting me in your arms, I would have thanked you, but I could not speak; and when with such labour and difficulty you brought me under your own roof, and

acted towards me who so ill deserved it at your hands, in all respects as a tender and dutiful daughter would have done to the best of mothers, I was astonished, and thought you could only do it with the hope of a large reward, which indeed you had well deserved : but when with so much real kindness, you told me, I was freely welcome, and offered to do as much again if ever it should be wanting, without an eye to fee or reward—you overcame me, and completely gained my heart. You heaped those “coals of fire” upon my head, which have melted down my pride, and made you from that moment my adopted daughter. At the time, I could not say this to you, and after you brought me home my mind was full, and I wanted leisure to think ; so I bade you come to me after dinner, and in the mean time I have settled how every thing shall be. I will take your eldest girl entirely to live with me : she shall continue to go to school for a year or

two to come, and I will instruct her in all that is wanting to fit her for a good service, which when she is of a proper age I can easily get for her, and when she leaves me another shall come, and so on." O madam, how do you think I felt when I heard all this !

Lady. Dear Sarah, your little story fills my eyes with tears, and my heart with gladness.

Sarah. And this is only a part of my happiness. She told me that now she was getting into years, and her health but weak, she was resolved no longer to work so hard as she had done. "If I and my husband," said she, "were never to gain another shilling, we have enough to maintain us in plenty all our lives. He has long wanted me to live in ease and quiet, so with God's blessing, I will spend the rest of my days in comfort, and in doing good. That dear lady who is so much your friend, said what a help you might be to me, and now, unworthy as I

am, I have fully proved it. You shall milk and churn for me till your daughter is able, and I will pay you with plenty of milk and fruit, and garden-stuff for your family. Go no more for water to any well but mine, and for any thing that is wanting for you or yours, come to me as to a mother. I have no near relation but a sister who is older than myself, and well provided for, and my husband and I have so settled it, that each of us shall dispose of half what we are worth ; so I will directly make my will, that you may not lose your support, even if I should die."

I laid my hand upon her mouth, begging her to stop, and not talk of such great things, till she better saw how I should deserve it ; but she would not be stopped, and from that time she *has been* like a mother to me and mine.

Lady. Though it does not always happen, yet frequently our gracious Father thus makes virtue to prosper upon

earth : and when we have overcome evil with good, and prosperity is as with you, the effect of truly Christian conduct ; the delight which arises from it is a hundred fold ; for we have not only obtained a present advantage, but brightened the prospect of endless felicity, which will be the portion of the righteous in a better world.

Sarah. O madam, all this happiness and comfort do I under God, owe to you ; for by your means was my heart converted from worldly pursuits, and turned to my duty and to heaven. I have often and earnestly prayed for grace to enable me patiently to submit to the poverty, to which my husband's ill conduct seemed, without hope of remedy, to condemn me and my children ; but now *that* evil is graciously removed, and every thing is happy about me, but his temper and habits. Do not however think that I am so ungrateful to heaven and you as to be discontented, or to complain of those.

Lady. In this world, my good Sarah, *perfect happiness* neither is, nor ought to be found. She is an inhabitant of those brighter regions towards which a pious heart continually aspires ; and only her likeness or or shadow shews itself here to our admiring eyes, to encourage and stimulate our desires and efforts to obtain her. Yet mixed as the present life is with pleasure and pain, good and evil, too many of us are disposed to take up our rest here, and act as if we were citizens and inhabitants of the earth, instead of “strangers and pilgrims,” passing through it, and seeking a better, even a heavenly country. Go on then, diligently endeavouring to follow the precepts and example of your Lord ; patiently and submissively enduring the evil, and praising the bountiful Bestower for the good ; till in his own appointed time, he calls the faithful and obedient followers of his son, to inherit with him, the kingdom prepared by his infinite

goodness for their "exceeding great reward!"

At this moment Mrs. Mansfield's servant entered, to inform her that a poor woman, the mother of a large family, had been ill for some days, and that her sister, who was come from some distance to nurse her, earnestly requested her immediate help. Ever ready to obey the calls of benevolence, the good widow took a hasty leave of Sarah, and instantly set out towards the cottage of the sick woman.

The morning was warm and misty, and the paths wet, which, as her feelings led her to walk fast, heated and fatigued her very much. Immediately on her arrival she went up into the close chamber of the patient, (into which a fire had most injudiciously been put, notwithstanding the warmth of the weather, and the burning fever she was in,) and was beginning to ask some questions respecting her disorder, and the reason why she

had not been earlier informed of it, when a sudden faintness came over her, her eyes grew dim, her head giddy, and she sunk down upon the bed, beside which she had been imprudently standing.

The poor sick woman was insensible to all that passed, being at that time in a state of delirium, but her sister had sufficient presence of mind instantly to open the window of the room, and send one of the children for a cup of fresh water, with which she sprinkled the Lady's face: in a short time she began to revive, and by degrees recovered her recollection, but was seized with a violent shivering and sickness. Nothing proper for her relief was to be had in this poor cottage, but she was far less alarmed than those about her, and desired her servant might be sent for, and told to bring drops with her. Ill as she really was, her thoughts turned again to the poor object who lay before her, and having made a few enquiries, she direct-

ed that the fire should be immediately removed, and the door of the room kept constantly open. "You have seen," said she, "the effect which the bad air has had upon me, and how can it be fit for a sick person to breathe. When the weather is dry and mild, let the window be kept always open ; and when this cannot be done, be careful not to shut the door, day or night.

Being fully convinced that the poor woman's complaint was a low fever, she inquired whether they could procure some fresh yeast, and being told that there was some then in the house, ready for making bread, she bade the woman go to a neighbouring public house for some beer, and when it was come, directed a large spoonful of the yeast to be given in a tea cup full of it ; and this to be repeated every four hours, till they heard further from her.

Mrs. Mansfield now perceived the sickness beginning to return, and going

with some difficulty down the steep and narrow stairs, sat down in the kitchen, where she found immediate relief from the fresh air which came in from the open door. She had not sat long before Hannah her faithful servant entered, full of anxiety and almost breathless with haste. She brought drops, wine, and biscuits, from a store which her mistress always left under her care, for the benefit of any poor people who might be in want of such things while she was absent from home. One of the biscuits she was prevailed upon to eat, dipped in a glass of ginger wine, and it appeared considerably to revive her ; the remainder she left for the use of the sick woman, strictly cautioning her sister not to let her have much wine at a time, and promising soon to send some strong mutton broth, of which she might give her a tea cup full as often as she could take it.

She now thought herself so much better as to be able to walk home, and leaning on her servant's arm, she at length, greatly fatigued and exhausted, reached her own habitation.

"Ah madam," said Hannah, when she had seated her upon a sofa, "you did very rashly to go out again to-day without taking both rest and refreshment, especially to visit a person who had a fever. You used always to eat something just before you went to such complaints, and to take a bit of camphor to put into your mouth when you went into the sick room."

Lady. True, my good Hannah, those were precautions which your dear master insisted upon my using, and my dear Fanny was never unmindful of them; but of late I have not been so careful as perhaps I ought; nor did I know to-day, what was the poor woman's disorder. Do not however lose another min-

ute before you begin to prepare some broth for her.

Hannah instantly departed, but soon returned with a basin of tapioca, which she justly thought more suitable to the present condition of her lady than any refreshment of a more solid kind could have been; and in less than half an hour afterwards, this valuable servant came to say that she had put the mutton to stew, taken her own dinner, and was ready to go and fumigate the room of the sick woman. This was a process with which she was well acquainted, and the eminently beneficial effects of which in fevers she had often witnessed; but as all my readers may not be equally well informed on the subject, I will here put down an easy receipt.

Put half a pint of vinegar into a tin saucepan, and add to it half an ounce of pounded saltpetre: when this is melted in the vinegar, hold the saucepan in the left hand, and with the right put in a red

hot poker ; and moving gently about the room and round the bed, let the steam which rises from it mix with the air. This should be done every four hours, making the mixture fresh every morning.

This fumigation destroys the contagion of the distemper, and is particularly necessary in the chambers of the poor.

Mrs. Mansfield commended the alacrity and good will with which the worthy Hannah performed this deed of charity, and giving her a bit of camphor to hold in her mouth while she was in the sick room, bade her strongly enforce the necessity of keeping it cool and airy. She also sent by her two changes of linen for the poor woman, and one for her bed ; having several sets of a proper kind always by her, ready to be brought out at a minute's warning, to supply the pressing calls of poverty and sickness united, which should never ask in vain where the power of relieving them is bestowed.

The good widow was now left alone, and feeling greatly fatigued, tried to get some repose upon the sofa: but sleep fled from her aching eyes. She was languid and weary, but restless. Such a condition to the generality of people is most wretched; but she had that composure of mind, that *peace within*, which enables us "to endure all things:" and though she could not steadily fix her thoughts upon any object, her wanderings were perplexed rather than painful. Soon after the return of Hannab, she took a dish of coffee and went to bed, where she slept tolerably, and arose the next morning at her usual time, apparently much better, though still languid. Her first care was to send to the sick woman, and she had the pleasure of hearing that a wonderful amendment had taken place. The first fumigation of the room, and the clean linen which was put on immediately after, had given her great refreshment, and after she had, at the

proper time, taken a second dose of yeast, she had fallen into a sweet sleep, which continued for several hours, and she had since taken broth and biscuit many times, and continued to amend.

This account was highly gratifying to Mrs. Mansfield, who remained during the day in a state which could hardly be justly called sickness or health. She had no positive ailment, but seemed to herself to be but half awake, could take little nourishment, and was incapable of paying much attention to any thing. The next day, which was Sunday, not being able to attend public prayers, according to her constant custom, the minister called, after the evening service, to inquire respecting her health. She was lying upon the sofa when he came in, which seemed to answer the first question that he meant to ask. "I see, dear madam," said he, "that my fears were but too well founded; it must have been a serious cause which kept you from the house of prayer."

Lady. I am indeed far from well, and I thank you for this kind visit of inquiry : to-morrow, I should have requested the favour of seeing you.

Minister. I rejoice that I have been before-hand with your wishes, and hope I need not assure you, that it will highly gratify me to be serviceable to you in any way.

Lady. Short as your residence in this neighbourhood has been, I should be most ungrateful for your past friendliness if I could doubt it. I am not at present very ill, but I know not how soon I may become so, and it is best to make all necessary arrangements for both worlds as fully as we can, before the task becomes difficult. Immediately after the death of my child, I made my will, leaving a small estate, which I inherited from my father, to his nearest relation, a worthy man, but living in a distant county, and so much engaged in business, that I have never seen him.

Besides this, I have two thousand pounds to dispose of, the half of which I have divided amongst my mother's relations, who are few and well provided for. In the disposal of the remaining thousand, I shall, as my executor, give you some trouble. You will find a small legacy to my servant, besides my furniture and clothes, and several sums to worthy persons who are, I know, in narrow circumstances; all together to the amount of five hundred pounds. Out of the last five hundred are to be paid the small annuities which I have named for the lives of several old or sickly persons, who would otherwise be heavy sufferers by my death. This will at first take up the whole interest of the money; but as they drop off, I would have the principal so released, given to the funds for the spread of gospel truth and Christian morality, which you will find particularly mentioned in my will; so that in the end the whole money will be vested in them, and,

I trust, doing something towards furthering the approach of our Master's blessed kingdom, when the donor sleeps in the peaceful mansions of the tomb. The remainder of my income belongs to the property of my dear husband, and will be disposed of as his will directs.

Minister. Be assured, dear madam, that should I survive you, I will most carefully attend to all that you wish; but I hope and trust that the time is not near: we can ill spare such an example as you daily give to all who know you.

Lady. Ah sir, I have little besides good intentions to plead in my own behalf. But, lifting up her meek eyes and one hand, God is love! he will mercifully pardon the faults and errors of those who diligently strive to serve him.

A soft flush appeared upon her cheek, and after a silence of a few minutes, she thus went on.

You cannot wonder that I should look forward with delight to a moment which

will realize all that my heart pants after. Believe me, sir, my thoughts are not confined to the happiness of a re-union with those whom I most loved on earth ! My soul mounts higher ; it looks to, it aspires after a state in which God will be more sensibly known, more dear to the affections of his children than any inferior being can be : when our natures will be so purified and exalted, that we shall behold him more clearly, and love him more ardently than we have now words to express or imaginations to conceive !

These great thoughts were too powerful for the weak frame which embodied them ; a faintness came over her, but fortunately a glass of water and some hartshorn were upon the table, and by a proper application of them she was soon recovered.

Minister. You have exerted yourself too much, dear madam, and must repose : but before I leave you I must beg your

directions with respect to the physician you wish to consult, for I will not lose an hour in sending for him.

Lady, smiling. You are too easily alarmed; I am in a weak state, but perhaps not even in danger of a serious illness. Have the goodness to come to me again in the morning, and I will then do whatever you advise. Indulge me, dear sir, in this; I cannot think of calling any one out in the night, unless it is quite necessary.

The good minister unwillingly complied with her wishes; and taking an affectionate leave, she soon afterwards retired to her apartment, where she passed a sleepless and uneasy night. Early in the morning she was informed that her friend was come, and begged to have her promised directions, which, without further delay, she sent to him; feeling herself to be in a state which really required medical help. Her own illness however did not prevent her from thinking of the

sufferings and wants of others : she had directed that the poor woman who had been the last object of her care, should be supplied with every thing that could forward her recovery, and had now the satisfaction of hearing that the yeast and fumigations were no longer necessary, the fever having left her, and that she took nourishment and gained strength every hour.

About the middle of the day, Mrs. Mansfield was again visited by her friend, who informed her that his servant was returned from Manchester, and that the doctor would be with her in a short time. "And now that I have gained one point, dear madam," said he, "I am aiming at another, upon which I have so entirely set my heart, that I trust you will not refuse it to me. I have this evening promised to comply with the earnest entreaties of my daughter, and bring her with me to visit you; and you must oblige me with permitting her to remain

here till you are perfectly recovered. She is young, but I will answer for her care and abilities as a nurse: she had, alas! too good an opportunity of learning that valuable art during the long illness of her dear mother. Though her acquaintance with you is short, it has been sufficient to inspire a degree of affection and respect which makes her anxious to exert all her powers for your comfort and benefit.

Lady. I can have only one objection to this most friendly offer; but that is a serious one. It is possible that my complaint, which I plainly perceive to be feverish, may become infectious. Should your dear Emma catch the distemper from me, I might be the means of depriving you of your darling child, and society of one likely to become a most valuable member.

Minister. Talk not so, dear madam; suffer us to perform a sacred duty, by doing our utmost to preserve a life so precious. The danger of infection, in a

house like yours, and with every precaution taken, is not worth mentioning, while the benefit to my daughter by attending upon you at such a time, may be more than even a father can calculate. Let her see how a true Christian is supported under the most trying circumstances ; it will be a noble lesson, written in living characters on her heart. I have learned from the experience of many years, that "it is better to go into the house of mourning than into the house of joy," and I am anxious to impress the same profitable conviction upon the mind of my child.

Lady. You plead as I, on a like occasion, should have done for my Fanny, and I can no longer resist. May I be enabled so to pass through the trying hours which perhaps are near at hand, as to leave every pious impression that you wish indelibly impressed upon the heart of your Emma !

The physician now arrived, and the good minister soon after took his leave, promising to return in the evening with his daughter. The doctor carefully examined into the state of his patient, and after writing a prescription, gave minute directions with respect to her treatment to the faithful Hannah, who was well qualified for the office of a nurse, by the practice which, under her benevolent mistress's instructions, she had had amongst the poor.

Notwithstanding all her care, the disorder of her lady increased hourly ; and when Mr. Grey and his daughter came, she was so ill that the amiable Emma resolved to spend the night in her room, Hannah agreeing to go to bed, on condition of being allowed to take her place at break of day. Towards midnight the fever ran high, and she became delirious. Had not Miss Grey been happily possessed of a calm steadiness of mind, not very common at her age, she must have

been alarmed by the change which so suddenly took place in her friend, from a sweet placid composure to a sudden and rapid effusion of words, to which, for the most part, no distinct meaning could be affixed. Sometimes, indeed, she would repeat the names of those dear departed ones who filled so large a part in her heart, and sometimes a broken sentence in the form of prayer or praise, would falter on her lips, and then a sweetness, almost angelic, would spread itself over her features,—but in a moment it was gone, and wild, incoherent words succeeded.

It was a trying night to the youthful Emma; often in the course of it did she lift up her heart to God; praying him to restore those faculties which had been so zealously employed in the cause of Christian piety; and picturing to herself the delight of hereafter believing that she had contributed towards an end so desirable, so “devoutly to be wished.”

These interesting thoughts, and the successive kind attentions with which she occupied herself about her friend, made the time appear so short, that it seemed rather a disturbance than a relief, when, at break of day, Hannah came to take her place, and she could hardly be prevailed upon to retire into another apartment for a few hours of rest.

Early on the following morning the good minister arrived, and was making anxious inquiries at the door of Mrs. Mansfield's chamber, when a light and hasty footstep was heard upon the stairs. It was Sarah, who, as soon as she saw Mr. Grey, curtsied and stood in silence. "Come up, my good woman," said he, "I need not ask your business here. Our dear friend is very ill, I fear dangerously ill,—but the will of God be done."

Poor Sarah lifted up her hands and streaming eyes, a picture of silent wo, and Mr. Grey going into a small study

which joined the lady's apartment, beckoned her to follow him, and thus addressed her.

Mr. Grey. I do not wonder at your concern : no one can know this excellent woman without feeling anxiously desirous to keep her longer here.

Sarah, still weeping. O sir, she was and is every thing,—all the world to me. I owe to her all that I have, and, under God, all that I hope for ; and I am now come to beg that I may stay here as long as——O good sir, I hope you do not think that we shall lose her.

Mr. Grey. That can only be known to *Him* in whose hand is the life of every creature. I earnestly hope and pray that she may be restored to us ; but I fear she has hardly strength to resist so violent an attack.

Sarah. Then I have only this to ask, that I may be allowed to be with her, and tend upon her to the last. Do, good sir, beg for me that I may do this.

Mr. Grey. Most willingly would I do so, did not I know that you have a family of children who cannot be provided for without your care.

Sarah. I have contrived it all. As soon as I heard of my dear lady's having caught the fever, and that it was likely to go worse with her than, by her good help, it had done with the poor woman on the green, I ran to my neighbour Mrs. Bennet, who, though once an enemy, is now, by her means, become my friend, and just reaching a chair in her kitchen, sunk down quite unable to speak, my heart swelling to such a degree that I thought it would have burst. She opened my stays, and rubbed spirits upon my temples, and at length I became easier and began to weep: but my sorrow was more than I can tell, and chiefly because I could not go to nurse the dear lady in so dangerous a case. When my good friend found this, she offered to send for my mother to come and stay with the

children, and said she would herself take care that they wanted for nothing while I was away. O sir, I cannot tell you how thankful I was ; and in the remainder of yesterday, last night and this morning, I have put every thing in order, and have taken leave of my dear children, the infant and all, for I had weaned him just before ; and it will go near to break my heart if I am not allowed to stay.

Mr. Grey. Was your husband willing that you should come ?

Sarah. I got Mrs. Bennet to ask him, and as she does so much for us and for our children, he could not refuse her ; and I am in great hopes that when he finds how comfortable my poor mother will keep the house, that he will consent to her staying with us, which I have quite set my heart upon.

Mr. Grey. And are you not afraid of catching this fever, which you believe to be so infectious ?

Sarah. Ah sir, I will trust all to God! He will take care of my little ones, if I should die in such a cause. But may I not go to the dear lady? I know she will like to see me, and, if it may be suffered, I will never leave her night or day.

Mr. Grey. I will speak to my daughter on your behalf; both she and the worthy Hannah will be glad of so zealous an assistant. May it be the will of the great Disposer of events, that your labour of love may be crowned with the wished-for success.

Miss Grey now entered the room, and Sarah was kindly received by her: she had just left Mrs. Mansfield, who was so ill that they rejoiced that the physician had been engaged to attend her every day till some change took place. He accordingly came on that and many succeeding days; but notwithstanding his skill and the anxious care of her attendants, who did all that affectionate

love could prompt them to, the disorder was not to be stopped or even checked in its progress.

The doctor calculated how long the fever would be in coming to a crisis, after which he said the question of life or death would soon be decided. But he warned her friends not to be sanguine in their hopes, as the violence of the complaint and her apparent weakness left little more than a possibility of a favourable issue.

All the neighbouring families for miles around, seemed deeply interested in the recovery of this excellent woman; but no one, out of her own house, manifested an anxiety so truly heart-felt as poor Thomas. Twice every day did he come to inquire after her, and the good Hannah so well knew the regard her lady had for him, that she generally answered him herself. She had indeed a mournful kind of pleasure in describing her condition

to one who so fully shared in all her feelings.

The worthy Mr. Grey spent as much of every day as his other avocations would permit with his beloved daughter, and was sometimes taken by her into Mrs. Mansfield's room. She was seldom sufficiently herself to know him; but he would stand by the side of her bed, and with uplifted hands supplicate the Father of mercies for her relief. All waited with increasing anxiety for the wished-for, yet dreaded crisis; and the day before that on which it was expected to take place, as the minister and his daughter were taking their evening coffee in the study, they were informed that a gentleman, who seemed to have come a journey, requested to be admitted to them. He soon after entered, and announced himself by the name of William Mansfield. He appeared greatly shocked when he heard of the dangerous state in which his relation lay. "I see," said he, "that I

am speaking to my cousin's friends, to those who take no common interest in her welfare ; but I have more reason than any other can have, to look up to her with grateful veneration. O sir, I have never seen this admirable woman, but I and mine are indebted to her for more than I can express ; and should I be deprived of an opportunity of pouring forth my thanks before her, it will be the heaviest disappointment of my life."

Mr. Grey and his daughter minutely described the present situation of their minds, how faint their hopes, and how weighed down by fears ; and almost with trembling agitation, told how soon the question of life or death would probably be decided : after which Miss Grey retired to the room of her friend, and her father, bidding her adieu for the night, took their new guest home with him ; and mutually pleased with each other, they spent the evening chiefly in an interesting discussion of the virtues and amiable

qualities of her whom they so soon feared to lose.

The physician came the following day, and according to his expectation, pronounced that the fever had left his patient, but as he had foreseen, in so very weak a state, that it would be little less than a miracle if she long survived. She was, however, in her perfect senses; her eye, with its wonted intelligence, kindly greeted her friend and attendants as they approached the bed, and when they kissed her pale hands, each in turn felt their gentle pressure.

The doctor had ordered her to be kept perfectly quiet, and during the whole day you would hardly have known that a living creature inhabited the house. She was able to take but little nourishment in the course of it, yet in the evening was evidently better, speaking affectionately and gratefully to her delighted nurses, and inquiring for Mr. Grey. "Why is he not here?" said she. "I want to

thank him for *you*, my Emma," tenderly pressing her hand. "If to-morrow is granted to me, pray let him come."

Mrs. Mansfield's inclination to speak was repressed as much as possible by her prudent attendants, and they had the comfort of seeing her spend a quiet and easy night. In the morning, with a sweet smile, she bade them hasten breakfast; but when it came, she could eat little, and when they raised her up, was several times near fainting.

The doctor having left all necessary directions, excused himself from coming on that day, and it passed on much as the preceding one had done. In the evening, however, she seemed better than she had yet been, and having again mentioned her wish of seeing Mr. Grey, his daughter thought there would be no risk in telling her of the arrival of Mr. William Mansfield; but with that intelligence she appeared greatly agitated, and begged that both might be immediately sent

for. Emma would fain have delayed this till the following day. "If I had known, dear madam," said she, "that you had taken such an interest in your cousin, I would not yet have mentioned him; I thought, you had been almost strangers."

Lady. "So we are personally; but he is dear to my heart, and," smiling, "I wish to *commence* an acquaintance with him in this lower world: so you must give me an opportunity to-day; I may have no other. Nay, my love, do not let the idea give you pain: and you, dear Sarah, try to wean your heart from the fond hope of my continuing much longer here. When can I die more happily than now? with friends so beloved to close my eyes, with my senses so clear, and," lifting up her hands and eyes, "with a heart full of love and confidence in the Almighty Being to whom I go."

Emma. O say no more, dear madam, you will exhaust the little strength you have, even before the chief occasion for

it comes. But if you will take a cordial, and try to compose your mind, I will at all events obey you by sending for our friends.

Mrs. Mansfield agreed to the conditions, and a message was sent to request their immediate presence. No regulations in the apartment were needful to prepare for their coming: it was now, as always, kept like the mind of its inhabitant, fit for the examination of the purest eye. She looked around, and was pleased to perceive all in its usual state of order and neatness. Her own appearance was highly interesting, and there were about her all the comforts and proprieties, without any of the fopperies which are sometimes seen even in sick rooms. Unable to rise from her bed, she was supported by pillows, and as she waited in expectation of her friends, there was an animation in her countenance and a brightness in her eyes, which revived the hopes of those about her, though it ought

perhaps rather to have alarmed their fears.

The gentlemen soon arrived, but Mr. Grey entered alone; and after a tender and affectionate greeting, in which the grateful widow expressed her high sense of the kindness of his daughter, she asked why he was not accompanied by her cousin; and being informed that he waited in the study till she wished to see him, "Let it be now then," said she, "I am impatient for his coming."

Mr. Wm. Mansfield entered the room, and approaching the bed, she held out her hand, which he took respectfully between his and affectionately kissed. She gazed upon him, but was unable to speak. "Dear lady," said he, "suffer me to retire; the sight of a stranger is more than you can bear at present."

Lady. No, do not go. I shall be better soon, and I have much to say to you.

Wm. Mansfield. And I, madam, have

to unburden a heart which is filled with gratitude to you ; but I fear you are yet unable to hear all that I wish to say.

Lady. No, dear sir, tell me all that concerns your own welfare ; for I am deeply interested in it.

Wm. Mansfield. It is to you, dear lady, that I am indebted for a large part of the happiness that I now possess. My cousin, as you well know, after having for years been a father to me, had entirely cast me off, forbidding me to see or even write to him again, and that in so solemn a manner that I durst not disobey him. I cannot express to you how much I suffered. I loved my benefactor, and hoped that, in his latter years of life, I and mine should have had opportunities of, in some measure, returning the many obligations that we owed him. It was this, believe me, and not the loss of worldly goods which his displeasure must occasion to me, that chiefly lay upon my heart. I have never coveted wealth ;

but the affections of my cousin were so dear to me, that I would have given up any thing, less than my principles and the lives of my family, to preserve them.

In this uneasy state did I remain till last Monday, when I was astonished by a hasty summons to attend him immediately at Bath. The servant informed me that his master had been dangerously ill, and on my arrival I ascended the staircase which led to his apartment with a beating heart and trembling limbs but the moment I entered, he opened his arms to receive me, and with expressions of tenderness kinder than I had ever before heard from his lips, told me, that I owed all to you; that when his heart was softened by illness and a near prospect of the grave, a letter which you had written sometime ago in my favour happened to meet his eye; that he had read it many times over, and that it had worked the change I saw.

A soft flush of delight was diffused

over the benignant countenance of Mrs. Mansfield ; she raised her beaming eyes to heaven, and her lips moved ; but the agitation of her mind was more than her weak frame could bear : the transient glow which had visited her cheeks and lips suddenly retired, leaving them even paler than before, and it was with difficulty that she was kept from fainting.

The gentlemen, fearing that too much had already been said, retired into the study, and sat silently meditating on the change so soon likely to take place in the interesting object of their regards : a change so glorious to herself, but so lamentable to the many who were cheered and edified, in their journey through life, by her affectionate attentions, and the excellent example which, whether in sickness or in health, she every hour displayed before their eyes.

Sarah seldom quitted the room of her dear lady ; and on the occasion of her late alarm, Miss Grey having rung the

bell, Hannah obeyed its summons. Mrs. Mansfield, however, soon recovered, and being informed that her cousin was still in the house, appeared satisfied, and after a silence of some time, asked whether Thomas knew the state that she was in. She was told by Hannah of his constant and anxious inquiries, and that he was then in the house, waiting her return, for a more particular account. "Let him then come up," said she; "I may not again be able to speak to him before we meet in a better place."

He joyfully obeyed the unexpected call. But when he entered the room, and saw the pale, yet sweet and animated countenance of her to whom he had long looked up as the most perfect of the human race, he suddenly stopped, and clasping his hands together, involuntarily dropped on one knee, beholding her as an angelic being whom it seemed a sort of profanation to approach. She, however, with her accustomed graciousness, held

out her hand : " Come near, my friend," said she, " and tell me for the last time, that you will go steadily on in the path of righteousness till we meet in those happy regions which the infinite goodness of our heavenly Father hath prepared for those who love him."

Poor Thomas was unable to speak ; and after a pause, she went on. " Praise God with me, bless him, thank him, for thus peacefully, thus happily bringing me to the end of my earthly career. What more could I have asked than he has thus graciously given."

Thomas. O madam ! death has no terrors for you : you have gained that victory which is through our Lord Jesus Christ. I see that a real Christian can not only look it in the face, but look beyond it, to that blessed country, which neither sin nor sorrow can ever enter.

Lady. Prepare yourself diligently for the state in which you now see me, for it must speedily be your own. Take heed

unto your ways, and be fully confident that if you are "faithful unto death," God will bestow upon you "a crown of life."

Thomas, kneeling and clasping his hands. In my heart, dear lady, will I treasure up your words: next to the holy book of God, they shall be the guide of my remaining days, and when they are ended, may we meet again in that land of blessedness to which you first pointed out my way.

Mrs. Mansfield, whose strength seemed rather to increase than diminish, now desired that Mr. Grey and her cousin might be called in. As they came near, a sweet smile spread itself over her features. "I have now," said she, "standing round my bed, those whom I most love upon earth, those who, since the loss of my beloved husband and child, have most contributed to soothe my pilgrimage through it, and I see you with looks of love watching thus its latest stage. O my

Father," lifting up her eyes, " thou hast guided me through life, thou supportest me in death ! What but the incense of an adoring heart have I to offer in return for *all* !" After a long pause, which no one seemed disposed or indeed able to interrupt, " I thought," said she, " that I had much to say to each of you, but I must cut it short. Believe me, my cousin," turning to Mr. Wm. Mansfield, " you have rejoiced my heart. Remember me tenderly to my uncle, bid him not grieve for my loss, and tell him that the comfort of a Christian death, gives a foretaste of the joys that shall be hereafter. Dry those tears, my affectionate Sarah ; it is the hand of a Father which is leading me away, and shall I unwillingly follow its direction ? No, no : I have long looked forward to this hour ; it has been the business of my life to prepare for it ; and though I know that I have done but little, and that little most imperfectly, yet I have the joyful testime-

ny of a good conscience, that ‘in simplicity and godly sincerity’ I have had my conversation in the world ; and my entire faith in the infinite goodness and mercy of God, as declared unto us by his Son, leaves me no shadow of a doubt with respect to his gracious forgiveness of my many faults and errors.” After a long pause,—“O my friends, praise God, praise him for all that he gives us in this world, but *above all*, for the glorious assurance of *eternal life* ! The moment seems already present to my sight, when, at the sound of the Redeemer’s voice, the graves shall give up their dead, and the faithful, clothed in the unfading robes of immortality, arise to meet their Lord ! The hour approaches, when ‘He who shall come, *will come*, and will not tarry !’ Yes, my friends, we shall soon be called together from the sleep of death, to dwell where God will be with us, and Jesus the beloved of God, the ‘author and finisher of our faith.’”

She stopped, appearing nearly exhausted. "Dear madam," said Mr. Grey, "let us leave you for the present : to-morrow we will again request permission to return." She made a motion for them to stay, and speaking at first with some difficulty, thus addressed them.

"To-morrow," waving her hand, "is not for me in this world. O that in the dawn of an eternal day, we may all meet in love, as now. Receive, receive the last blessing of your dying friend : her last prayer for you and for herself is that we may be accepted by our God, as humble followers of Christ ; for 'it is a faithful saying, If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him !' 'Come then, come quickly ! even so come Lord Jesus !' " ;

The last words faltered upon her lips and were scarcely audible, all around her believing that her parting breath fluttered upon them : she sunk down, and remained without motion for a considerable time, "Leave us, my father," said Miss Grey,

who sustained herself with surprising firmness, not a tear falling from her eye, "but do not leave the house ; she may revive, and again wish to see you."

The gentlemen and the almost heart-broken Thomas immediately withdrew, and the anxious nurses perceived that the dear object of their solicitude still lived. After a time a nervous restlessness took place, and a difficulty of breathing, and during those painful moments, they knelt around the bed, contemplating the last faint struggles of mortality. At length, after a pause of perfect stillness, a marked appearance of sensibility revisited the eyes of the dying saint. She turned them upon each of her friends, with a look of inexpressible sweetness, and then towards heaven, as to their *resting place* ! her pale lips moved, but no sound was uttered, and the last incense of her devout and grateful heart, silently ascended to the throne of grace and mercy.

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Many minutes passed, after they were well assured that all was over, before one of the attendants moved ; but Miss Grey, still retaining her former firmness, at length arose, and after gazing for a time on the composed countenance of her friend, she kissed her forehead and lips with the most affectionate tenderness, and turning to Sarah, who was also rising, "No hand but mine," said she, "shall close these benignant eyes. O joyful, glorious hour, when they will open to beam angelic lustre throughout the endless ages of eternity !"

When this last sad office was performed, she could no longer support herself, but sunk, nearly insensible, upon a chair which stood near the bed. Sarah brought drops and water, while Hannah ran to call her father, who, as soon as she could walk, conducted her into the study, from whence Mr. Wm. Mansfield had retired to the parlour; and placing her with himself upon a sofa, her head reclining on

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his bosom, "my Emma," said he, "you have performed a noble part, you have done for our inestimable friend all that I wished, and even more than I your fond father expected from you. During her severe and trying illness, you were a daughter to her ; and when the last sad scene arrived, I witnessed that no tear of yours disturbed the saint-like calmness of her dying moments : now let them freely flow my child, it will relieve your overburdened heart."

Emma. O sir, how good you are, and how soothing are your praises to my troubled mind. Dear, dear departed saint ! she will be ever present to my fond remembrance.

Mr. Grey. May it be so, my daughter ; you cannot think of her too much. May her piety, her humility, her active Christian charity, be the models for your future imitation. Your situation is, in many respects, similar to what hers has

been, and from nature she received no talents superior to those which you possess.

Emma. Pray for me then, my father, pray that I may be enabled to emulate her in the use of them. In addition to what I can spare from my own means, let me be the distributor of the charities which she has bequeathed. In doing this I shall have the delight of continually hearing her blessed and praised ; and O Almighty Father ! grant that I may so tread in her footsteps from day to day, that after a life of real Christian piety on earth, I may be united to her in those regions of bliss which thou hast prepared for all thy true and humble worshippers."

In conversation like this did the good minister continue with his daughter, till he had in a great degree composed her agitated mind, after which he departed, and she retired to rest, with a determination not to leave the house of her friend till her remains were deposited in their

last earthly mansion. Mr. Wm. Mansfield having formed the same resolution, an apartment was also prepared for him ; and full of the affecting scene which he had just witnessed, he employed a part of the night in writing the following letter to his cousin.

MY DEAR SIR,

My last few lines informed you of the melancholy and dangerous state in which I found your incomparable niece, and I trust has in some measure prepared you for the contents of this. Alas ! you already too well know what I am going to relate, your fears run before my pen, and your heart already tells you that the best of women has performed her task upon earth, and is now, secure from all chance or change, awaiting the call of her glorified Master.

O sir, I saw her but once,—but *that* once, those few moments will be ever present to my mind. What she bade me say to you, I reserve till we meet,

and will only write of what I have this evening seen and heard. Nothing but the purity of her heart, and the truly christian life she led, could have imprinted on her countenance such a heavenly character. There was at times a devout sublimity in her eyes, which spoke a soul "athirst for God !" and looking earnestly forward to the time of appearing in his glorious presence !

Before I saw this incomparable woman, my heart was full of gratitude towards her, for her generous intercession on my behalf, to which under heaven I owe your forgiveness and favour : but the benefit which I trust I have now received, is of a still more precious nature : for to ensure a death like hers, I must imitate her life. I was early taught to adore and reverence my Creator, and to seek the good of my fellow creatures ; but I trust that in future I and mine shall be more ardent in our piety to God, and more charitable and affectionate to our brethren of mankind.

My mind is so filled with the scene which has but now passed before my eyes, that I could spend the night in writing and not tell you all I feel. But I have already perhaps said more than your weak health and spirits can well enable you to bear, and will only add that I am with the truest regard,

Your ever grateful and affectionate,

WILLIAM MANSFIELD.

This letter was immediately dispatched, and soon after the following answer was received.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I can never cease to lament the loss of her whom you justly term the best of women, for to me it can never be repaired. I looked, or rather I ought to have looked up to her as my best friend and adviser, in the preparation which she has often warned me that I ought to make for the state which she is now in, and from which

I cannot be far distant. Since I have by her means been happily reconciled to you, I have loved her as a daughter, and every hour felt more and more convinced, that the way to render the remainder of my days comfortable, and lay up a treasure in that country which will be our *abiding place*, was to put myself under her gentle guidance, and make her the director of all my plans of happiness, for this world and the next. I was meditating on this idea, which fast gained ground in my mind, when your first letter came, and burst asunder the web of virtuous comfort, which I had been weaving for the repose of my future days on earth, and to open my way to a place, where, after the turmoil and disappointments of this mortal life, my soul might find a final resting place.

But let no one delay for a single hour to do a needful thing. Months, years ago, I might have done this ! but now all is vanished, all beyond my reach. She was the corner stone upon which my

fabric of piety and benevolence was to be raised, and without her, I look in vain for a foundation on which to build it. From that time till the fatal certainty arrived, my mind was in a state of agitation more painful even than a knowledge of the worst.

With respect to the dear angel herself, I cannot wish her back in a world of cares and troubles; a world in which she had suffered losses which would have made any other woman the melancholy victim of regret and discontent. But she, like her beloved master, was perfected by sufferings, and when I have had time to recover myself and collect my scattered thoughts, I too will try to resign my will, to the will of Him who ordereth all events.

You tell me, my dear cousin, that the death bed of this saint has been to you a precious lesson: come then and teach it to one who needs it more. You and your family shall in future be all the

world to me ; from this hour I renounce its pride and its luxuries. I feel as one who walks upon the verge of life, and views the vessel waiting only for a breeze, which will launch him on the boundless ocean of eternity ! Let me hasten then to put on the heavenly uniform of holiness, and stow the lingering bark with all the good deeds that I may now have time for. As the first of these, and a specimen of the chief use which I mean hereafter to make of my wealth, I enclose a note for one hundred pounds, which I desire may be given amongst the neighbouring poor, on the day that the precious remains of my niece are committed to the earth.

Fine and expensive funerals I know she disapproved, therefore let her own directions on that point be exactly followed. But at the time when I promised myself such pleasure in visiting the dear creature herself, about May or June, tell the worthy Mr. Grey that you and I will spend a week or two with him, and then

a monument shall be erected to prolong the memory of her excellence : that though dead, she may still speak ; warning and persuading succeeding generations, even from the tomb.

What you mentioned in your first letter, lays me under obligations of the tenderest kind to the good minister and his daughter, and their kindness to the dear departed, shall be repaid as far as I have power to do it. We will establish a friendly intimacy between our families, the common love of both to her dear memory will be a sacred bond of union. We will also inquire out all the poor to whom she was attached, and they shall share my bounty.

Why did I say that I could form no plans for future virtuous happiness ? Ah my cousin, I feel that if we have the inclination, God will graciously supply the means. Talk no more, dear William, of my forgiveness ; what had I to forgive but your superior worthiness ?

The dear departed is never absent from

my thoughts, and I can conceive no *real bliss* but that of being re-united to her in a better world. But can I without presumption hope for this? I, who am only *entering* on the christian course? O that I had earlier found this blessed path: how far by this time might I have been advanced, how near to heaven! but alas, the eleventh hour of my day is come, while little of the allotted labour is performed. I cannot with him in the vineyard, plead that I was not *called* till now; for the sacred book of heavenly instruction has from my childhood been open before me; but I turned away from its precious pages, and sought only for that knowledge which would serve the short lived purposes of the present time. I have wasted the morning and the noon, but the evening is still left, before the "night cometh in which no man can work." Come, come my friend, my fellow labourer, and teach me by diligently employing what remains, to make the amends that are still possible for past

neglect. Come and console the heart,
while you direct the conduct of your
adopted father,

THOMAS MANSFIELD.

Before I conclude this little history, indulge me, my reader, in a few reflections on the extensively beneficial influence of active Christian piety, which has been exemplified in the life and death of the good widow.

Many well meaning persons, with talents and acquirements fully equal to hers, go through the world without suspecting that they could, or ought to be any thing more or better than the insignificant beings we behold them. They perform what are called the duties of their stations, in such a manner as to avoid the censures of the world, or the reproaches of their families, and this is all they aim at, all they believe to be required from them. But the mere absence of evil, is not good. Such sloth-

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ful, such low-minded persons cannot hope to be numbered with the "good and faithful servants," who have walked "worthy of God, who hath called them into the kingdom of his glory."

The usefulness of her whose example I wish particularly to recommend to females of independent fortune, was not, we see, likely to end even with her life: many of those whom she had been the means of converting from evil, were now become actively good, and daily extending the benefit to others: her uncle whom she thought beyond the reach of her pious efforts, looks back upon them with a conviction which at the time he would not acknowledge to himself; and the amiable Emma Grey, is likely by emulating her piety and virtues, to become a perfect copy of what she was. Thus from one individual with apparently little power or means of influence, what good may spread on every side.

Say not that you have no power, no talents, to advance the Christian cause,

to forward the blessed kingdom of your Lord: look into your own heart and conduct, and then tell me whether they have proved you *earnest* in a desire to do so? Do you cover your table with delicacies, and thinking that too little, spread it again to awaken the cloyed appetites of your guests? Do you thus expose yourself to blame for extravagance, and to ridicule for folly and vanity, while your sick or aged neighbour is pining for want? Do you decorate your own frail body with a useless variety of gay trappings, while perhaps in the very house of prayer, you see the shivering victims of disease and poverty, wanting the covering which the superfluous expense of yours, would amply furnish to them? And do you waste at the card table, or in other most unprofitable employments, that *precious time*, which the most thoughtless and ignorant must be sensible, might be bestowed in a thousand ways more profitable to their own hearts and understandings, and more beneficial to

their fellow travellers through a world of trial.

If this, or what resembles this should be your conduct, do not say that Mrs. Mansfield's character is above your mark, but that you have never *aimed so high*. And if what *she* attained is above your ambition, above your grovelling wishes, how will you aspire to the imitation of *him* who was the *perfect* model of all human excellence? And without an ardent desire, and strenuous endeavour to *follow in his steps*, we are his disciples but in name! Remember that when the awful day of account arrives, we shall be tried, not by the standard of the world, but by the standard of that Master whose holy and benevolent precepts it should be the constant employment of our lives, to understand and practice. Look well to it then, ye who live in careless selfishness, disregarding the ignorance, the miseries, and the vices of your fellow-men, and know that for this criminal neglect ye will be brought into

judgment! "Forasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me!"

Mr. William Mansfield was equally gratified and affected by the perusal of his cousin's letter: his generous heart glowed with delight, to perceive the happy change of disposition which it displayed, and he resolved to do all that in him lay, to promote the future virtue and felicity of his benefactor. He gave the letter to Mr. Grey, who could not read it without tears. "The influence of our late dear friend," said he, "reminds me of the fabled power once ascribed to a certain stone, of turning all it touched to gold: she in like manner seems to have purified and spiritualized all with whom she has been nearly connected. Happy, thrice happy power of communicating virtue, 'for its fruit is better than gold, yea than much fine gold;' 'for whoso findeth it findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.' "

At length the day appointed for the

funeral arrived : the burying ground was near, and according to her written directions, she was carried to the grave by six poor women decently clothed in black, the two foremost being Sarah Williams and the wife of Thomas. Mr. Wm. Mansfield and Miss Grey went as chief mourners, though there were many others ; for as she was universally respected and beloved, the whole neighbourhood, and especially the poor, in great numbers assembled on the solemn occasion. It was expected that Mr. Grey would address them at the grave, and though he before doubted whether he should be able to do so, he felt his powers revive within him, at the time when he most wished to call them forth ; and in a discourse which penetrated the heart of every hearer, he commented upon the truly Christian life and death of her whom they had now attended to her last earthly home ; and earnestly exhorted all around him, to be like her, *true worshippers* of the one infinite and eternal

God, as disciples and followers of his beloved Son Jesus Christ : To detest the vices and crimes, and to raise their minds above the follies, the vanities, and the selfishness of the present world ; making all that befalls them in their passage through it, a means of preparation for that immortal state, that never ending life, into which the great " Captain of our salvation " is already entered, and from whence, at the time appointed by his heavenly Father, he will come in great power and majesty to call his faithful followers from the tomb.

" O my beloved brethren," said the preacher, " cast away from your hearts, and from your conduct, whatever you would fear, or be ashamed to own, at that most solemn hour. Let every future day, be a day of preparation ; that at whatever time your Lord comes, he may find you watching. " Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning ! " Praise and adore your great Creator, with all the powers which he hath bestowed

upon you, and spread the knowledge of his goodness far and wide. Let us not be content merely to pray for the approach of that happy time, when the will of God shall "be done on earth," even "as it is in heaven;" but let each of us in his different station, *zealously and actively labour* to hasten its arrival, for "blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing."

"Awake then! awake to righteousness," and be not as those who have not the knowledge of God. "Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up by Jesus," let us by a life of holiness and active virtue, make ready for his coming: trusting in "God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort," who thus invites his creatures to be blest:—"Come out from among the wicked, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you, and will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD ALMIGHTY!"

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